

THE SEJARAH MELAYU REVISITED

A COLLECTION OF SIX ESSAYS



AHMAT ADAM

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The *Sejarah Melayu* Revisited

A Collection of Six Essays

Ahmat Adam



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To my fellow Melakans

Preface

The essays published in this book were written primarily between 2010 and 2019. The essay entitled “Mystic Letters and Their Influence in the Malay World” is based on a lecture given to the Southeast Asian postgraduate students at the University of Oxford, during my tenure as a senior Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies in 2011. The research for this essay was carried out in Oxford itself.

The papers on the *Sejarah Melayu*, or the *Malay Annals*, are the fruits of several years of research carried out in Malaysia, Leiden and London. During my sojourn as a visiting Senior Research Fellow at the History Department of the University of Malaya in 2010, and from 2012 until 2015, I had the opportunity of meeting Associate Professor Dr Victor A. Pogadaev, who was then teaching Russian at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. Dr Pogadaev was kind enough to mention the existence of a facsimile of a manuscript of the *Sejarah Melayu* that once belonged to Adam Johann von Krusenstern, which was in a book available at the faculty’s library. I began working on the Krusenstern manuscript, which finally resulted in the recension of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*, published by Yayasan Karyawan in 2016.

While in Leiden I also took the opportunity to continue my research on the *Sejarah Melayu*, which I had begun during my sabbatical from Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

Abbreviations

AH/H	Anno Hegira/Hegira
Ar.	Arabic
BKI	<i>Bijdaragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde</i> (The Hague: Leiden)
CE/BCE	Christian Era/Before Christian Era
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malayan (Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MBRAS	Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MS/MSS	Manuscript/manuscripts
Pers.	Persian
Port.	Portuguese
r.	Reign
Sansk.	Sanskrit
s.a.w.	SallaLahu alayhi wasallam (peace be upon him)

Acknowledgments

The writing of these essays would not have been made possible without the assistance and collaboration of several people and institutions. I am especially indebted to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Malaysia, then under Tan Sri Dr Rais Yatim, for the financial assistance given in 2011. It was through the ministry's generosity that I was able to conduct my research at the University of Leiden, the British Library in London and of course the Bodleian library at Oxford University.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the librarians of several libraries, namely those of the University of Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, the National Library of Singapore, the libraries of the University of Leiden, the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Bodleian Library and its branches at Oxford, and the British Library in London.

To my friends and fellow academicians who gave their support by inviting me to present seminar papers on several occasions, I wish to say thank you. I am also grateful to Datin Saidah Rastam and Mr Bert Tan of "Melaka In Fact", for having invited me to speak on the history of Melaka in their seminars. I would also like to thank Dr Siti Zunairah binti Jaafar, another "Malaccan" who shows keenness in the history of Melaka even though she is from the medical profession, and has strongly supported my efforts to write a fresh interpretation of Melaka's history.

Lastly, thanks are due to my family members, especially to my wife, Datin Aysha binti Datuk Khalid, and our children, who have given their full support to my research and writing all along.

Orthography

The transliteration of Jawi (Malay Arabic script) to Romanised letters (Rumi) is based on the Library of Congress system. For example, the phoneme / ‘ayn / [ع] in Jawi is transcribed with the use of / ‘ / . Other Jawi letters transcribed into Rumi are as follows:

ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sy
ص	ṣ
ع	‘
ط	ṭ
ف	f/p
ق	q/k
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
ة	t

Glossary

<i>adiraja</i> (Kawi/Sansk.)	the first among all the rulers, the supreme ruler
<i>abjad hawaz</i> (or <i>hawiz</i>) (Ar.)	the seven Arabic letters chosen to determine the eight-year cycle
<i>agra</i> (Sansk.)	the supreme, highest
<i>amar</i> (Port.)	to love, to like very much
<i>Bendahara</i> (Malay)	prime minister
<i>bandalheira</i> (Port.)	low behaviour
<i>bandara</i> (Port.)	loafer, idler, sluggard
<i>bhagya</i> (Sansk.)	fortune, luck
<i>darma</i> (Sansk. <i>dharma</i>)	virtue, morality
<i>fusta</i> (Port.)	pinnaces
<i>hikayat</i> (Pers.)	story, history, romance, fable, narrative, tradition
<i>huruf</i> (Ar.)	letters of the Arabic script
<i>ilmu huruf</i> (Ar.)	science of letters regarding the mysticism of the Qur'anic letters
interpolation	addition
<i>janela</i> (Port.)	window
Jawi	Arabic script adapted for Malay
Kawi	Old Javanese language (<i>Jawa Kuno</i>)
<i>kaid</i> (Pers.)	king
<i>Laksamana</i>	admiral
<i>lancão</i> (Port.)	large sailing ship
<i>meayarkan</i> (Kawi)	to unfold; spread out
<i>mestiço</i> (Port.)	mixed race
<i>petuturan/pituturan</i> (Kawi)	remembrance & memory
<i>purna lango</i> (Kawi)	overwhelming feeling of love, lovelorn
recension	review, re-examination, revision
Rumi	Roman or Latin script
<i>sakai</i>	tribesmen
Sri Tri Buana (Sansk.)	lord of the three worlds
Suprab(h)a (Kawi, from Sansk.)	radiant, glorious light
<i>tuha</i> (Kawi)	old, skilful leader, leader of a group

A note on the text

The *Sejarah Melayu*, as it is popularly known, is not its original title. It is actually the *Sulalat u's-Salatin yakni pituturan segala raja-raja*. In these essays, the original title, sometime shortened to *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, and its other names such as the *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Melayu* and the (inaccurate) *Malay Annals* will be used interchangeably when referring to this classical Malay work.

Certain terms, for example Old Javanese or Kawi, will be used interchangeably. The same goes with certain spellings, such as *sura/surah*. Archaic spellings in various languages (e.g. “Valentijn” instead of “Valentyn”) may occasionally appear.

The names of several important copies of the *Sejarah Melayu* will be shortened for simplicity in-text. These are the:

- Raffles MS No. 18, henceforth the Raffles 18;
- Krusenstern manuscript, henceforth the Krusenstern MS; and
- Farquhar Malay MS No. 5, henceforth the Farquhar 5.

Questions on the authorship and origins of the *Sejarah Melayu*¹

The *Malay Annals* and its variants

The *Sejarah Melayu*, known in the ancient Malay courts as the *Hikayat Melayu* – or more correctly, *Sulalat u's-Salatin yakni pituturan*² *segala raja-raja* (genealogy-cum-recollection of Rajas) – is the only surviving text of the earliest Malay literary work to have been written about the Malays outside Sumatra. Erroneously translated into English as the *Malay Annals*, it has been regarded as the finest and most famous of all the Malay classics. Over four centuries since it was first written in the sixteenth century, there have been several editions, interpolations and revisions at different periods of time by alleged authors, copyists or court writers, thus resulting in a literary corpus of no less than 32 variants, kept at several libraries worldwide (Roolvink 1967: 301).³ The principal theme that runs through the narratives is identical – there is little doubt that the author(s) intended to narrate, through their work, the fortunes and misfortunes that befell the Malay Rajas of the Melaka line.

It was written with the purpose of providing a remembrance (Kawi or Old Javanese: “*pituturan*”) for the Malay Rajas to remind them of their duties, and to provide the succeeding Malay generations with a history of the genealogy of the Melaka Sultans and their successors, together with a chronicle of the Malay royal ceremonials. Underlying all these were subtle warnings about the folly of departing from the ancient covenant made between Demang Lebar Daun, the mythical ancestor of the Malay people, and Raja Sri Tri Buana,⁴ in which both pledged that subjects and rulers had to be cognisant of their respective responsibilities. In their “contract”, the former had vowed that his descendants “shall be the subjects of your Majesty’s [Sri Tri Buana’s] throne, but they must be well treated by your descendants” (Brown 1983: 16). Conversely, Sri Tri Buana made Demang Lebar Daun give an undertaking in return, that his descendants would be obedient and would never “for the rest of time be disloyal to my [Sri Tri Buana’s] descendants, even if my descendants oppress them and behave evilly” (ibid.).

Authorship

Several generations since its first narration, the *Malay Annals* has undergone changes when subsequent so-called authors or copyists of later years weaved their own interpolations into the original narrative, thus resulting in several recensions. For the purposes of this study, this writer has undertaken a study of the contents, in particular the prefaces of some of the well-known versions of the *Malay Annals*, namely the Raffles MS No. 18 (or the Raja Bongsu manuscript),⁵ which was first edited by Sir Richard Winstedt (or R.O. Winstedt) (*JMBRAS* 1938 (16) 3: 1–155); the Blagden manuscript (Blagden 1925: 10–52), which was the nucleus of the Raffles 18 and according to Winstedt, narrated events prior to 1536; the Leiden Cod. Or. 12026 that belonged to Sultan Abdul Rahman Syah of Lingga (r. 1811–32); the Abdullah and Shellabear redactions and the English translation made by John Leyden between 1810 and 1812 (published in 1821, with an introduction by Raffles); the Farquhar Malay MS No. 5 (1827);⁶ and lastly the Krusenstern manuscript (1798).⁷

An exhaustive study of the Krusenstern MS has yet to be carried out in the English language, although a no less important edition was published in Russian by Dr E. V. Revunenkova (2008). It is believed that the Krusenstern MS is the second oldest copy of the text in existence, after the Raffles 18. It was copied in 1798 by at least three copyists, whose names were Haji Muhammad Tahir al-Jawi, Muhammad Zakat Long and Ibrahim Jamrut (see the transliteration of the facsimile in Ahmat Adam [2016: 191]).⁸ This version of the *Sejarah Melayu* may have been one of a kind (though probably copied from an older text)

and was eventually published by a mission press in Singapore in 1840/41, introduced by Abdullah Munshi. Either this text, or a similar one, was copied by Raffles's clerk, Ibrahim Kandu, and translated into English by John Leyden (1810–12). It is for this reason that this writer thinks that to do justice to the discussion on the origins and authorship of the *Malay Annals*, several variants of the text need to be studied. While the Shellabear redaction has been the most widely read text, since it was first published in 1896, it is nonetheless merely a hybrid text, for the “reviser” had relied on several sources for his recension (Linehan 1947: 105). William Shellabear used Leyden's translation, a copy of the *Annals* from the Logan Library in Singapore, Maxwell's MS No. 26 (1850), another copy (not earlier than 1856) that was owned by Munshi Mohamad Ally, and the uncompleted revised French edition (1849) by M. Edouard Dulaurier (Linehan 1947b: 105), among others.

Roolvink has categorised the texts of the *Malay Annals* into two prototypes: the short (standard) and long (extended) versions. Examples of the short version include the Farquhar 5 and the manuscript from Palembang (Roolvink 1967: 308-9). The short version, in which the last narrative concerns a request by Tun Ali Hati to Sultan Mahmud that he be put to death, actually forms part of the narrative of the invasion of Melaka by Afonso Dalboquerque. It had been used as the concluding narrative or chapter of the Krusenstern MS as well as many other recensions, many of which had relied on the Abdullah Munshi redaction. The said chapter is also found in both the Raffles 18 and the Shellabear redaction. In the long versions, such as the Shellabear redaction, the Leiden Cod. Or. 12026 and texts of its kind, other episodes have been included after the killing of Tun Ali Hati: the text ends with the ascension of Raja Ali⁹ to the throne of Johor as Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah, who set up court at Pasar¹⁰ Raja (or Pasir Raja) in Johor Lama, and the chapter concludes with the statement about Johor being attacked by Jambi, which occurred in 1673 CE (1083 AH) (Ismail Hussein 1979: 191).

The question that Roolvink raised *viz.* whether the short versions had formed the basis of the Raffles 18 is an interesting one. In the Palembang version, the last chapter narrates the conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese, which is what the Krusenstern MS also does. The original manuscript, written after the Malays' loss of Melaka, must have ended with the death of Tun Ali Hati and not the Portuguese attack on Johor Lama in 1535 as claimed by Winstedt. We think that the narratives in the Krusenstern MS (which should certainly be considered as one of the short/standard versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*) were later adopted by redactors or copyists as the basis for their texts, which were then interpolated with other episodes.

Until now, the determination of the authorship of the manuscript and the date of its original composition are still being debated by scholars of Malay history, particularly in Malaysia. Many have drawn a conclusion that the author was none other than Tun Seri Lanang, the *Bendahara* (prime minister) of Johor. Some strong proponents of this view are Abdul Samad Ahmad and Muhammad Haji Salleh, Muhammad Yusoff Hashim and Teuku Iskandar, who share the belief that the *Malay Annals* was written in 1612 and became known as Raffles 18. While it may be true that the *Bendahara Paduka Raja* (Jelani 2009: 60, 158) was mentioned as the “author” of the *Malay Annals* by Nuruddin ar-Raniri in his work, *Bustanus-Salat* (which the latter began to write in 1638), there is, however, no clear evidence that Tun Seri Lanang was the author of the 1612 recension. We believe that Tun Seri Lanang was a pseudonym: “*Lanang*” is a Kawi word meaning “man”. It is also difficult to ascertain whether the *Bendahara Paduka Raja* referred to was indeed “Tun Seri Lanang”, and whether ar-Raniri had even met the said Tun Seri Lanang during a hunting trip to Pasai (*ibid.*: 158)¹¹ Despite the inclusion of his name in all later revisions of the *Malay Annals* (which we think were written after 1612), other copyists had nevertheless retained the part of the preface of the Raffles 18 which stated that it was Seri Nara Wangsa (also named Tun Bambang) who “came bearing on the head a command from the Ruler in the Lower Reaches”, to “make a chronicle of the genealogy of the Malay Rajas” (Raffles 18: preface).

Regardless of the real meaning of the words, however, the *fakir* (servant) mentioned as the executor of the command was only a compiler, who by his own admission had assembled “all the stories of the men of bygone days” (Brown 1983: 2). It is quite obvious that his work was later copied by others who also made

further interpolations. Whether or not the preface of the Krusenstern MS was based on the original text is difficult to determine. The word “*Bendahara*”, which was used in the preface of the manuscript and others that were copied in the nineteenth century (namely the Leyden, Abdullah Munsi and Shellabearones), is not found in the Raffles 18 (1612). The Raffles 18 only mentioned the phrase “*pada hari petuturan [sic, pituturan, Jawi: فتران]*” which translated literally into English means “on the day of remembrance”. Thus, the “author-editor” of post-1612 *Sejarah Melayu* had replaced the word “*hari*” with “*bendahara*”. Even Winstedt himself thought that the word “*hari*” was inadvertently written instead of *Bendahara*.¹² A discussion of the authorship of the *Malay Annals*, however, will not be satisfactory without perusing the relevant portion of its preface. Let us first look at the relevant portion of the preface in Raffles 18:

... Now in the year 1021 H, in an early *Dal* year on the 12th of the month of *Rabi’ul-awal*, on Sunday, at the time of the forenoon prayer, in the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, shadow of God upon earth, while he had a settlement at Pasar [or “Pasar”] Raja – at that time there came Sri Narawangsa, whose name was Tun Bambang, son of Sri Agra¹³ Raja

[*نفر راج*] of Patani, with a command from the Ruler in the Lower Reaches ... and the behest of his Highness was thus: “It is my wish that a chronicle be made of the genealogy of the Malay Rajas and the ceremonial of their courts, for the information of my descendants who come after me, that they may be conversant with the history and derive profit therefrom.”

When your humble servant ... heard the word of his Highness, he took the command upon his head and his limbs were bowed beneath the weight of it. Then he braced himself to be held up to ridicule in carrying it out diligently while at the same time beseeching help from God, the Creator of the Universe, and from His Prophet, the chiefest of mankind ...¹⁴

There are several pertinent points in the above preface:

1. Many Sunni Muslims believe that 12 *Rabi’ul-awal* is the date that the Prophet Muhammad was born.
2. The sentence “[n]ow in the year 1021, in the year of *awal al-awal [sic]*, on the 12th of the month of *Rabi’ul-awal*, on Sunday, at the hour of the early forenoon prayer,¹⁵ in the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, shadow of God upon earth, while he had a settlement at Pasar (or “Pasar”) Raja ...” could be ambiguous, since there is no mention of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin being dead. It also implies that the *Malay Annals* could indeed have been revised by someone during the reign of one of two possible Sultan ‘Ala’uddins: the (earlier) son of Sultan Mahmud and Tun Fatimah, who was the first Sultan of Johor (r.1528/29–64), or the (later) son of Sultan Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah, who was the fifth Sultan (r. 1597–1613).¹⁶ They are not to be confused with their predecessor, Sultan ‘Ala’uddin of Melaka, son of Sultan Mansur Syah (r. 1477–81).
3. There is no mention of an assembly of chiefs. The word “*Bendahara*” is not used; neither could we find the name of Tun Seri Lanang in the Raffles 18.
4. The command was given directly by the *Yang Dipertuan Di Hilir* (Ruler in the Lower Reaches) to Tun Bambang.
5. The name of the chronicle was given as *Sulalat u’s-Salatin yakni Petuturan [sic, Pituturan] Segala Raja-Raja*.

Now compare the preface of the Raffles 18 above with the Krusenstern MS, which shares a close resemblance to all other texts listing Tun Seri Lanang as the author-editor:

... Subsequent to that, the humble writer ... had on one occasion sat in the company of much superior dignitaries, spending lighter moments in conversation; among them there was a far superior chief who said to me: “I heard that there is a chronicle brought from Goa by the nobleman of Sogoh [*sic* Sagoe]¹⁷; perhaps we could improve on it including its ceremonials, in order that it shall be known by our descendants of heretofore and that they will all remember it and reap benefits from it.” After hearing such command, heavy were my limbs, a humble man named Tun Mahmud [*محمود*],¹⁸ more tenderly known by the name, Tun Seri Lanang, designated as Bendahara Paduka Raja, grandson of the grandson of the Orang Kaya Paduka Raja,

grandson of Bendahara Seri Maharaja, son of the Seri Nara Diraja, Tun Ali, son of Mani Purindan; he found God through the mystic way, and Malay being his race from Bukit Siguntang Maha Miru, the upper part of Malakat [**ولو ملاكت**] is his country, Batu Sawar abode of peace.

These were his words: In the *Hegira* year of the Prophet may peace be upon him, one thousand and twenty one in the year of the early *Dal* on the twelfth of *Rabi'ul-awal*, on Thursday at the hour of early forenoon prayers, during the reign of the late raja who died in Aceh, Seri Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah, son of Sultan Mahmud, grandson of Sultan 'Ala'uddin, great grandson of Sultan Mansur Syah, grandson of the grandson of Sultan Muzaffar Syah, son of Sultan Muhammad Syah, during the time when he was ruler in the country of Pase [p-a-s-y; *sic*, Pasir] Raja, **at that moment there came to me Seri Nara Wangsa named Tun Bambang, son of Seri Agra Raja of Patani bearing the command of the Yang Dipertuan, Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic* Ma'ayat] Syah, ibni Sultan Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah** [emphasis added]...

... Such was the command of His Highness: "Verily we request the *Bendahara* that a history of the Malays be made together with its ceremonial so that it shall be known by our descendants who come after us, that they shall remember so that they shall reap benefits from it. After this humble self has composed himself I then braced myself to be held to ridicule¹⁹ towards working with assiduity on it; and pray for God's guidance and ask for signs from the prophet, while also asking for holy sanction from the four companions of reverence. And so I compose this chronicle and I name it the Chronicle of Kings, that is the genealogy-*cum*-memorial of Kings ..."²⁰

There are several significant points in the Krusenstern MS which should be noted:

1. The date 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1021 H, year of the early *Dal* (13 June 1612), is correct except that it was given as a Thursday instead of Sunday, which could have been a miscalculation by the compiler.
2. The command was issued by Sultan Abdullah son of Sultan Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah to Tun Bambang, which clearly contradicts the first statement that mentions the time as "during the reign of 'Ala'uddin Riayat Syah son of Sultan Mahmud ..."
3. This is the only version of the *Malay Annals* in which the author-editor categorically stated that it was revised some time during the reign of "the one who died in Aceh", Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah (son of Sultan Mahmud).
4. The *Hikayat Melayu* (*Malay Chronicles*) was brought by the *Orang Kaya Sogoh*, a title not of Malay origin but was that of an Acehnese chief of a local territory. "*Sogoh*" from the Acehnese "*sagoe*" [Malay "*segi*"] refers to the territories ruled by chiefs. The territory outside Greater Aceh, the realm of the Acehnese king, was traditionally divided into three sides or territories forming a triangle, each being ruled by the *Uleebalang*.²¹
5. The command was written twice; first it was given by a man of chiefly position to a *fakir* (whose name was initially not disclosed), to have the Malay chronicle from "Goa"²² that was brought by a chief of Sogoh [*sic*] improved. Then the name of Tun Seri Lanang was interpolated into the sentence "[a]fter hearing such command heavy were my [the fakir's] limbs a humble man named Tun Mahmud more tenderly known by the name, Tun Seri Lanang..."
6. Tun Bambang's name was only revealed as the bearer of the command of Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*] Syah²³ after the redactor had given the date and the time, that is, during the reign of 'Ala'uddin (son of Sultan Mahmud). According to this preface, Abdullah is no longer described as *Yang Dipertuan Di Hilir* (Ruler in the Lower Reaches), Raja Bongsu (the youngest-born Raja) or Raja Seberang (the Raja across the river bank), but Sultan. This clearly indicates that the *Malay Annals* were written during the reign of Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*] Syah, who only ascended the Johor throne towards the end of 1613.
7. The command requested the *Bendahara* to work on (*perbuatkan*) the *Hikayat Melayu*, and the *fakir* braced himself for ridicule (*perkunjaklah*) to carry it out diligently.
8. The name of the chronicle was given as *Sulalat u's-Salatin yakni Perturan* [*sic*, *Pituturan*] *Segala Raja-*

Raja.

It is these contradictory statements in the above preface of the Krusenstern MS and others of its kind (which obviously came about as a result of the interpolation of the author-editor(s) of the post-1612 versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*) that have brought about controversies regarding the “authorship” of the work. It has been argued that the words “*datang menjunjungkan* [emphasis added] *titah*” may also be translated as “[he] came bearing on his head a command for”. The suffix “-kan” in the sentence may in fact render the meaning “benefactive”. Thus, one interpretation is that Tun Bambang was tasked with finding someone else to execute the command.

In spite of this controversy, if one were to compare the prefaces of the Raffles 18 and the Krusenstern MS, it is quite clear that certain parts of the preface of the Krusenstern MS can provide us with a clue as to when this particular version of the *Malay Annals* was copied. As mentioned in the said preface, the revision was done during the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah (son of Sultan Mahmud Syah). Since this particular ‘Ala’uddin was said to have been killed in Aceh in 1564, and bearing in mind that he ascended the throne after the death of his father in 1528, the *Malay Annals* would probably have been written between 1529 and 1564, though our guess is that it would have been most likely before 1536, since the last episode of this version only covered the events up to 1535 (Winstedt, 1938: 30). The author-editor of the Raffles 18 or the Blagden manuscript would have likely written his version (based on this copy) in 1612. After this date, however, another version was produced with several interpolations made by its reviser, namely the news that a Malay chronicle had been brought from “Goa” by a Dato’ of Sogoh [*sic*, Sagoe] and that Tun Seri Lanang’s name, though absent in the Raffles 18, was given as the author who wrote it after receiving instructions from “Sultan” Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*] Syah.

According to several versions²⁴ that mentioned Tun Seri Lanang’s name and an almost complete background of his pedigree, the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* was written during the reign of the ruler who died in Aceh, whom many scholars have wrongly accepted as the seventeenth-century Sultan ‘Ala’uddin, who was the arch-enemy of Aceh’s Sultan Iskandar Muda (r. 1606–36). But as the Krusenstern MS has shown, an earlier draft must have been written during the reign of the previous Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, the first Sultan of Johor. It was this ‘Ala’uddin who was killed by the Acehnese in 1564, probably because of his friendship with the Portuguese at Melaka.²⁵

Who was Tun Seri Lanang?

According to several versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the person called Tun Seri Lanang was named “Mahmud” and not “Muhammad”. The Krusenstern MS, which to date appears to be the earliest copy of the post-1612 version and its kind, also mentioned “Mahmud” as his name.²⁶ It was only in the Abdullah, Leyden and Shellabear redactions that Tun Seri Lanang’s real name was stated as “Tun Muhammad”. But these texts were copied much later than the Krusenstern MS.

Tun Mahmud gelar Tun Seri Lanang was the son of Tun Hamad [h-m-d] the *Temenggung*,²⁷ whose title was *Paduka Raja* (Ahmat Adam 2016: 261).²⁸ Tun Mahmud, who became better known as Tun Seri Lanang, was probably appointed *Bendahara Paduka Raja* when he was in his late thirties or early forties at least. No young man could logically carry the burdens required of the *Bendahara*. Assuming that he was about thirty-five years old in 1575, he must have been born circa 1540.

Tun Seri Lanang was said to have been appointed *Bendahara* immediately after the death of the old *Bendahara Paduka Raja*, during the reign of Sultan Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah (r. 1570/1571–97), who was also the former Raja Omar of Pahang. From the Portuguese sources, we are informed that Sultan Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil, whom the Portuguese called “Raialle”, was already established at Johor Lama, which the Portuguese attacked unsuccessfully in 1576 (Macgregor 1955: 87; Gibson-Hill 1955: 139–140). When Johor Lama was besieged by the Acehnese in 1582, Tun Seri Lanang was most probably the incumbent *Bendahara*. Following the death of Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah, however, Tun Seri Lanang continued to serve under his son, Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, who set up court at Pasar [*sic*] Raja,²⁹ on the upper

kuala (confluence) of Sungai Riun (the Riun River), around 1608. ‘Ala’uddin was described as “a lazy and indolent prince, sleeping almost the whole day, getting drunk, and amusing himself with his women, whilst he left the business of government to his brother, Raja Bongsu and to the high court dignitaries” (Hervey 1885: 134 – 135),³⁰ meaning that it was Raja Abdullah, the Raja Bongsu, who handled the governance of the *kerajaan* (kingdom) under the guidance of Tun Seri Lanang. But while ‘Ala’uddin lived at Pasar Raja, Raja Bongsu built his residence across the river at Pengkalan Rama, thus giving him the title Raja Seberang (the Prince on the Opposite Bank, see MSS 1).

We do not know when exactly the *Bendahara* undertook the task of writing the *Malay Annals*, but to sum up, the Shellabear recension and its kind claimed that Tun Seri Lanang was the author-editor, and that it was copied in 1612 during the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah (son of Sultan Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah), who was Sultan of Johor from 1597 until 1613 but became a fugitive until after 1616 or until a period before 1622.³¹ The copyist or editor of the Raffles 18 does not mention the name or pedigree of Tun Seri Lanang. The so-called “*fakir*” mentioned in the text gives us no clue that Tun Seri Lanang was the author-editor. Nevertheless, despite the Raffles 18 being quite clear about Tun Bambang carrying out the command given by the Raja Di Hilir; the Malay words “*menjunjungkan titah*” could be literally translated as “to carry out the command on the head”. This may be interpreted that while orders were given to Tun Bambang, it fell to somebody else to execute (the “*fakir*” in mid-1612). But whether “*fakir*” refers to Tun Seri Lanang or not is difficult to speculate. And there was also the possibility of Tun Bambang revising the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* in 1612.

Be that as it may though, it is difficult to imagine that the *Malay Annals* could have been completed in a short period of time (i.e. in 1612 or early 1613) considering the circumstances surrounding court life at Batu Sawar and the busy schedule of a “*fakir*”, who was undoubtedly a court official. To make matters worse, any intention of completing the work would have been nipped in the bud by the onslaught of the Acehese forces on Batu Sawar in June 1613, which utterly destroyed Sultan ‘Ala’uddin’s (son of Sultan Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil) court after a siege of twenty-nine days. After the forces of Iskandar Muda had devastated Batu Sawar, they rounded up every high-ranking official of the court and took them as captives to Aceh. One of these officials was most likely the *Bendahara*, who must have accompanied the Johor prisoners. But existing sources seem to show that while Raja Bongsu, or Abdullah, remained in captivity with the other members of the Batu Sawar court, the incumbent Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah somehow managed to escape to Bentan (Marsden 1986: 440; Foster 1934: 169–170, 172).

Perhaps because of ‘Ala’uddin’s escape, Iskandar Muda allowed Raja Bongsu to return to Johor in late 1613. The Acehese Raja had not only installed Raja Bongsu as the ruler of Johor with the title of “Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*, Ma’ayat] Syah”, but also married him off to his younger sister (Gibson-Hill 1956 (a): 130–131). Although nominally free, Abdullah was always under the watchful eyes of Iskandar Muda. In early 1615, he was summoned to Aceh to participate in a planned attack on Melaka – the Acehese war fleet, consisting of five hundred ships and sixty thousand men, equipped with large canons and other weaponry, then sailed to launch a failed attack on Melaka, following which the Acehese army retreated to Bengkalis (Marsden 1986: 141). The Sultan of Johor, however, only returned to Batu Sawar in the first quarter of 1616 (Hooykaas 1947: 98).

While there is no written evidence to show that Tun Seri Lanang stayed for good in Aceh or whether he had returned to Batu Sawar in September 1614 together with Sultan Abdullah, local Acehese tradition nevertheless strongly points to the fact that Tun Seri Lanang was appointed some kind of chieftain, possibly to the level of *uleebalang*, in the district of Samalanga by Sultan Iskandar Muda (Daud & Sakti 2010: 202). Although the Acehese “*Sarakata*” belonging to Tengku Di Meulek did mention the appointment of a *Teuku Bendahara* in Samalanga in 1022 H (Daud & Sakti 2010: 202–204), there was no mention of Tun Seri Lanang whatsoever. Even the date is suspect. There was a very strong likelihood that the date had been interpolated by the writer or other copyists, since the position of the *Bendahara* during the establishment of Dutch administration in Aceh had very much to do with the right to inherit tracts of land in the district of Samalanga.³² Another strong reason to dismiss this claim is the fact that there were

other Malay chiefs, including other *Bendahara* who were exiled to Aceh, namely the Perak *Bendahara*, *Raja Bendahara*, *Penghulu Bendahara*, *Bendahara Darussalam* (Tun Seri Lanang's grandson) and members of the Kedah, Perak, and Pahang nobilities (See *Adat Aceh* in MSS Or. 459).

Nonetheless, internal evidence of the *Sejarah Melayu* seems to support the thesis that Tun Seri Lanang did not return to Johor but instead opted to stay in Aceh. Support for this claim is an interpolation by the copyist of the Krusenstern MS, which hints that the *Annals* were revised or recopied in Aceh at this time, probably by Tun Seri Lanang, who was in exile since the middle of 1613.

In Narrative 26 of the Krusenstern MS (140), Tun Seri Lanang's pedigree is given with almost complete details. He was said to be the son of Tun Hamad [h-m-d] with Tun Genggang alias *Datuk Sayang* [s-a-y-ng] (Krusenstern MS: 140). Tun Seri Lanang, dubbed "the *Bendahara* who went to Aceh", was said to have had three sons and three daughters by his wife, Tun Aminah. They were Tun Komak [k-m-k] (probably a daughter), Tun Anom [a-n-m] (an elder son titled *Seri Maharaja*) and Tun Jenal (titled *Bendahara Paduka Raja*) also known as *Datuk Sekudai*, and Tun Ali (titled *Paduka Maharaja*), later to become *Bendahara*. The "*Bendahara* who went to Aceh" (read: Tun Seri Lanang) also had by his secondary wife (*gundik*) a son named Tun Rembau (titled *Seri Paduka Tuan*) who rose to become a *panglima* (war-leader) of Bandar in Aceh (see facsimile in Ahmat Adam 2016: f.148). Tun Rembau married the daughter of the *Bendahara* of Perak³³ and they had four children: Tun Aceh (titled *Bendahara Dar al-Salam*), Tun Perak (Raja Indera Bongsu), who married the daughter of Maharaja Tun Habib and an unnamed offspring. Tun Perak had three children. But we are only told that he had a son named Tun Habib (titled *Tun Narawangsa*), and a daughter who was married to *Seri Paduka Tuan*.

This interpolation of Tun Seri Lanang's life details is a key difference between the Raffles 18 and the Krusenstern MS. It can be found in Narrative 26 of the Krusenstern MS, between the story of the King of Kampar and that of Patih Adam, the *Pangeran* of Surabaya. Meanwhile, Narrative 16 of the Raffles 18 begins with the equivalent story of the King of Kampar, but does not mention Tun Seri Lanang's pedigree.

On account of this interpolation, it can be surmised that even though the Raffles 18 does not mention Tun Seri Lanang as its author-editor, it is possible that the *Bendahara* of Johor revised the *Malay Annals* while in exile, probably some time between 1614 and 1616. He must have already been a very old man – he would have at least been 73 years of age when the forces of Iskandar Muda invaded Batu Sawar.

The revision of the *Sejarah Melayu* in Aceh

Based on the evidence, there is a strong possibility that the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* was completed when Tun Seri Lanang was in exile in Aceh. The mere fact that the Malay chronicle from "Goa" (Aceh) was brought by an *Orang Kaya* of Sogoh [*sic*, Sagoe] suggests that it was written in Aceh but because of the many interpolations it is difficult to ascertain its authenticity. To sum up, a so-called *Orang Kaya* (an Acehnese title) of "Sogoh", which refers to a chief from the *Sagoe* (local district), arrived with a copy of the *Hikayat Melayu* from "Goa". His arrival is mentioned in the Krusenstern MS, Shellabear and other similar versions of the *Malay Annals* which list Tun Seri Lanang as the "author". Interestingly, the fact that the incident took place during the reign of Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*] Syah, who ascended the throne in late 1613, is another piece of evidence. So was the mention of Tun Rembau, Tun Seri Lanang's son, who held the post of war-leader in Bandar [Darussalam], Aceh. The fact that the Shellabear edition mentioned Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah as "the one who died in Aceh" was an interpolation since it was the earlier Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah (son of Sultan Mahmud) who was killed in Aceh, and not the later 'Ala'uddin (son of Ali Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah).

Winstedt has argued that there is also the possibility that Tun Seri Lanang's name and his genealogical pedigree could have been interpolated at a later period by someone who probably knew of Tun Seri Lanang's role as the author-editor of the *Malay Annals*, and it was also not improbable that the interpolation was done after his death (Winstedt, 1938: 36). Although this might be the case, the Krusenstern MS nevertheless did include information about Tun Seri Lanang's family background even

though, as pointed out by Wilkinson, “Malays rarely claim the authorship of their own works”.

The claim by many writers, Winstedt included, is that the *Sejarah Melayu* was copied in 1612 from an earlier draft during the reign of the third Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, and this claim is probably true. Indeed, when Raja Abdullah instructed that the *Malay Annals* be written in May 1612, it was during that Sultan’s reign. But this could also be an interpolation of information from an earlier draft which was most probably written during the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah (son of Sultan Mahmud) “the one who died in Aceh”. This confusion was exacerbated by the assumption by many past and present-day writers that it was the ‘Ala’uddin who ascended the throne of Johor in 1597 who was taken captive and then killed in Aceh, allegedly in 1615. Although several writers, among whom were Cowan (1937: 5), Netscher (1870: 31) and Mohammad Said (1979 (1): 248), suggested that Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah (son of Ali Abdul Jalil Syah) did meet his death in Aceh, the claim cannot be proven. The sentence “during the reign of the the late [Sultan] who died in Aceh [*Marhum yang mangkat di Aceh*]”,³⁴ was actually a reference to the earlier Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah. There is practically no evidence to show that the second Sultan ‘Ala’uddin had been killed, for in 1615 the said Sultan was still a free man. In August he had in fact signed a treaty with the Portuguese in Melaka, with one of its conditions being that the Portuguese would escort his son, Raja Bujang, to stake his claim to the Pahang throne by virtue of the latter’s marriage to a princess of the Pahang royal family. In November 1615, ‘Ala’uddin was reportedly seen in the Singapore Strait (Gibson-Hill, 1956: 137). But his name seemed to have disappeared from the Dutch records in 1616. The author-editor of the 1612 text had probably known of the *Malay Annals* being first written during the reign of the first Sultan of Johor.

In the history of Acehnese relations with the Malay peninsula, there was only one Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah who died in Aceh. This Raja, who was the first Sultan of Johor, was taken in captive by the Acehnese during the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin al-Qahar (r. 1537–71). The author of the earlier draft of the Krusenstern MS was very certain of which ‘Ala’uddin was being referred to when he stated that the *Sejarah Melayu* was written during the reign of “Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, son of Sultan Mahmud Syah”. The copyists in 1798 appeared to have merely recopied an earlier draft which implied that the original *Sejarah Melayu* must have been written during the reign of the ruler “who died in Aceh”. But interpolations made by other copyists had given the name of a different ‘Ala’uddin. As a result, many students of the *Malay Annals* wrongly perceived that this Raja was killed by Iskandar Muda in Aceh in 1615.

With regard to Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*] Syah, friction occurred between him and Iskandar Muda in 1617. The latter was not happy to see Abdullah’s nephew, Raja Bujang, associating himself with the Portuguese, which led to Aceh’s attack on Pekan, the royal capital of Pahang. Although Raja Bujang managed to escape, his father-in-law and his brother-in-law (later to be made Sultan with the title, Sultan Iskandar Thani, in Aceh), were made captives. This incident prompted Sultan Abdullah (Raja Bongsu) to withdraw to Bentan. In that same year he sent his wife back to her brother, Iskandar Muda. In 1618, Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*] Syah thought it prudent to establish himself at Lingga, where he was joined by Raja Bujang. However, at the beginning of 1623, the Sultan was expelled by the Acehnese and was forced to flee to the Tambelan Islands, where he died in March the same year. As for the fate of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, not much is known except that he was succeeded by his son Raja Bujang in 1623 and it has been speculated that ‘Ala’uddin himself must have died between 1616 and 1622 (Gibson-Hill 1956(a): 137).

Since the original author of the Krusenstern MS had stated that the *Malay Annals* were written during the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah (son of Sultan Mahmud Syah), then it can be surmised that despite the interpolation of Tun Seri Lanang’s name by the copyists and the mismatching of the name of the day of the week in the Muslim calendrical year, the Krusenstern MS, like the Raffles 18, was based on a much older “master text” which was written during the reign of “the one who died in Aceh”. The author of the draft copy of the Blagden manuscript must have continued from where the original Melaka author had ended his narratives, that is, regarding the death of Tun Ali Hati.

The possibility of the author using other manuscripts to write the narratives cannot be ruled out either. As pointed out by Winstedt, the sections on the early history of Pasai must have been extracted from the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (Pasai Chronicle). But if Leyden's listing of the titles of several early Malay manuscripts or *hikayat* are to give us a lead (See Hooker 2001: 29–30), it is also possible that the author of the *Malay Annals* could have used other *hikayat* such as the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Melayu*, a manuscript whose title is almost similar to the *Ceritera asal raja-raja Melayu punya keturunan*,³⁵ and a “kinglist” viz. the first part of Maxwell 105, a brief version of which is also found in Raffles 18 (Roolvink 1967: 306–307).

The existence of the different redactions of the *Malay Annals* clearly shows that they were copied from a nucleus “master text”, most probably written by a Melaka author (Winstedt 1938: 27). It is also possible that the Raffles 18 was based on a draft that was quite different from the Krusenstern MS. The different choices of words for the Javanese poetry in the narrative about the Melaka ruler's visit to the Majapahit court serves as evidence. Nonetheless, for some of the redactions produced after 1612, it looks as though more than one copyist was involved, like the Krusenstern MS which had three copyists. Interestingly, the Krusenstern MS differs from the Abdullah Munsyi and Munsyi Mohamad Ally manuscripts in terms of the arrangement of the chapters, or narratives. For example, Narrative 11 in the Abdullah and Shellabear versions are Narrative 12 in the Krusenstern MS.³⁶ But starting from Narrative 13, both the Krusenstern and Abdullah manuscripts follow the same order. The story of Sultan Mansur Syah's visit to Majapahit, for example, forms Narrative 14 in both the Krusenstern and Shellabear versions, but is in Narrative 9 of the Raffles 18.

In his 1938 work, Winstedt had correctly pointed out that the Raffles 18 is the only manuscript that provides the correct name for the *Hegira* year of 1021 (which was a *Dal Awal*) and the correct day of the week (which was Sunday, 12 *Rabi'ul-awal*) (13 May 1612). But was the Raffles 18 a copy of the oldest draft? F. W. Douglas, who used to possess two manuscripts of the *Malay Annals*, which he had given to the Selangor Museum (but were presumed destroyed by the bombing of the museum in 1945 following the allied forces' onslaught on the Japanese), had pointed out that the earliest edition was dated 12 *Rabi'ulawal* 1020 H (25 May 1611). This edition was written at Pekan Tuh [*sic*, Tuha] (Douglas 1941: 34). It is interesting to note that Pekan Tuh[a] was the location of the residence of 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah (son of Sultan Mahmud Syah). It is also worth noting that Munsyi Mohamad Ally's manuscript of the *Sejarah Melayu* (MS 86 DBP) and the Malay MS 1 of the John Rylands Library in Manchester (that bear Tun Seri Lanang's name as the author-editor) also show the date 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1020 H (25 May 1611) which was a *Ha* year, earlier than the Raffles 18. This date poses the question of whether this is the correct date of the *Malay Annals'* revision,³⁷ and not 1021 H (1612 CE). Incidentally, the date 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1021 H would correctly fall on Wednesday, and not the Thursday given by all the versions listing Tun Seri Lanang as the author-editor.

Regardless of whether it was written in 1611 or 1612, it is our opinion that by going through some of the more important versions of the *Malay Annals*, especially the Blagden manuscript which Winstedt said formed the last eight narratives of the Raffles 18, the Krusenstern MS (now kept in the Archive of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Saint Petersburg), and the Abdullah and Shellabear redactions, a reappraisal of the authorship of the *Malay Annals* can be made. While we may agree with Winstedt that the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* may have been inspired by the texts of the Javanese *Damar Wulan* and *Panji Tales* to write about Hang Tuha's adventure in Majapahit, we should also realise that only a man with a high degree of proficiency in old Javanese could have written such a beautiful piece on the Melaka ruler's visit to the Majapahit court.

When a comparison of the poetry and Javanese words copied in the different redactions is made, however, we find that only the copyists of the Raffles 18 and the Krusenstern MS made a serious attempt to write them in full, whereas the compilers of the Abdullah and Shellabear texts did not. As was stated earlier, the obvious differences found between the Javanese poetry of both texts seem to point to the fact that the author-editors might have used two different drafts to copy from. The discrepancies and

inaccuracies in the transliteration of certain Javanese words in Jawi script in all the popular redactions has led to the misreading of the words by some of the copyists – and as a result of their inconsistencies in spelling and also their poor handwriting, caused others to give different but unintelligible interpretations. This can only be explained by the fact that some of the manuscript copies were only produced at a later period.³⁸ But there are also cases where past and present-day writers have not been able to accurately decipher the Jawi script used to write such words and phrases. This is clearly evident from the mistakes made by scholars such as Winstedt, Brown, Datuk Madjo Indo, Abdul Rahman Ismail, Abdul Samad Ahmad and Muhammad Haji Salleh when they failed to make sense of the Javanese words in the poetry found in the narrative of the visit of the Melaka entourage to the court of Majapahit.

Looking at the differences between both the Raffles 18 and the Krusenstern MS with regard to the Javanese poetry and as well as words of Javanese origin, it becomes clear that the words in the said poetry are less corrupted in the former than the latter.³⁹ Likewise, the Abdullah and Shellabear redactions also revealed that the Javanese words and phrases had not been accurately copied, an indication that either the copyists did not know the language or had little understanding of Middle or New Javanese.⁴⁰ It also makes one wonder why the Abdullah and Shellabear versions had left out, in their entirety, the beautiful eight-line verse in the Raffles 18 that formed the *kidung* (for its English translation, see Brown 1983: 70). Even the statement describing the excitement of the crowd at the sight of the Javanese warrior, Sangka Ningrat, was missing. The absence of the Javanese verses seems to show that both the Abdullah and Shellabear redactions had relied on a similar version as their source (which was probably of a later draft). Even though the copyists who produced the Krusenstern MS had diligently copied all the poetry in 1798, they nevertheless made several errors in copying several of the words in Javanese, an indication that all or at least one of them could not read Javanese well. But the fact that they copied the verses fully shows that they might have obtained a manuscript that was quite different from the source used by those in the Shellabear, Abdullah and similar redactions. The inclusion of the more complete verses of the Javanese *kidung* shows that it was, like the Raffles 18, also copied from earlier drafts.

Thus, based on numerous other Javanese words and phrases being used by the original author, especially in the earlier narratives⁴¹ where they are found, the possibility of the author being a Malay of Javanese descent cannot be ruled out.⁴² It is worth noting that even the word “Lanang” is Javanese. One should also be reminded that during the last days of the Melaka sultanate, the Javanese community in Melaka was quite sizeable, and they also had their own community leaders and areas of residence.⁴³

There is little doubt that an original text of the *Malay Annals*, that was written by someone who witnessed the last days of the Melaka sultanate, did exist. The author, who outlived the Portuguese conquest in 1511, must have followed Sultan Mahmud’s flight from Melaka, which ultimately brought him to Bentan. It was there that the former Melaka ruler mostly remained between 1520 and 1526, before moving to south Johor the following year (Macgregor 1955: 74, 84). It is not improbable that another unknown author who had also served Sultan Mahmud Syah in Bentan and later his son, Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, had continued from where the chapter ended with the story of Tun Ali Hati’s death.⁴⁴ Whoever revised the early draft of the *Sejarah Melayu* must have written his text during the reign of this ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, since the narrative ends with events happening around 1535. In 1612, when Tun Bambang was asked to “improve” upon the manuscript, he must have obtained a manuscript that contained episodes after the death of Tun Ali Hati, and ended it with the killing of Patih Ludang by Sang Setia. This is evident from the eight narratives in the Blagden manuscript (Blagden 1925: 10–52) which, according to Winstedt, contain the nucleus of the ordinary version of the *Sejarah Melayu* (Winstedt 1938: Preface; 27, 33). Other copyists, who had also used sources which ended with the death of Tun Ali Hati, had later interpolated names, places and other events until the texts (like the Shellabear version) became hybrids which also introduced Tun Seri Lanang’s name and genealogy (Shellabear 1981: 156–157, 206).

Title of the *Malay Annals*

That the author-editors of both the Raffles 18 and the Krusenstern MS had made use of earlier drafts can also be ascertained from the title of the *Annals*. The title had been misunderstood even when Winstedt wrote his commentary in 1938. Since then, many scholars have repeated the mistakes made by Winstedt. The source of that error is that the Javanese word “*hari*”, or more appropriately “*ari*”, in the opening paragraphs of the preface in Raffles 18, which was misconstrued by Winstedt to mean the Malay word for “day” and was therefore considered it to be awkwardly misplaced in the sentence.⁴⁵ Actually “*hari*” [ari] in the sentence, “*Bahawa hamba minta diperbuatkan ‘hikayat pada [h]ari pertuturan segala raja-raja Melayu*” (Verily I request that ‘a chronicle be made of the **memory** (*pertuturan sic, pituturan*)⁴⁶ of the Malay Rajas, emphasis added), should be read as an “emphatic particle” in Old Javanese.⁴⁷ It could also be read as a term of address to more distant relatives or even unrelated persons.⁴⁸ In the context of the phrase “*hari pertuturan*”, therefore, also means addressing the people in the genealogical history of the Melaka Rajas.

The copyist in 1612 had studiously copied the title of an earlier copy of the original manuscript called *Sulalat u’s-Salatin yakni Pertuturan [sic, petuturan] Segala Raja-Raja*. There is therefore nothing wrong with the sentence “*Bahawa hamba minta diperbuatkan hikayat pada hari pertuturan segala raja-raja Melayu ...*” (Verily I request that a chronicle be made **of the memory [emphasis added]** of the Malay Rajas⁴⁹ ...) except that the use of the word “*pertuturan*” [Jawi: p-r-t-w-t-w-r-n]⁵⁰ after “*hari*” (which forms part of the subtitle for the *Malay Annals*) had indeed confused many a copyist who then interpolated the name of Tun Seri Lanang in the text, and had the word *hari* erroneously replaced with *Bendahara*. This misreading of the phrase by the copyist(s) of the *Malay Annals* must have begun after 1612, as shown by the Krusenstern MS. It was also due to this that many have regarded Tun Seri Lanang, the *Bendahara*, as the author of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*.

Upon taking a closer look at the words, however, it seems clear that the words “[h]ari *pertuturan*” [*sic, pituturan*] are indeed Javanese words. Up to the present many have been led to accept, without question, Winstedt’s assumption that the words “*pada hari pertuturan*” are Malay words. Thinking that it was an orthographical error by the author, Winstedt went to the extent of suggesting that the words should instead be read “*pada Bendahara peraturan...*” (a disposition to the Bendahara...) which certainly is a misreading by Winstedt and those who agree with him.

In his misreading of the word, Muhammad Haji Salleh has further exacerbated the issue by suggesting that “*pertuturan*” might be an archaic Malay word or perhaps a spelling error in Jawi and therefore should be replaced by “*perteturun*” (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1997: xv), a word that does not seem conceivably correct in Malay, and neither is it found in any Malay dictionary. Muhammad was guessing that “*perteturun*” must be a corruption of “*perturunan*” since other copyists had also used “*perturunan*” (descendants).⁵¹ Abdul Rahman Ismail, nevertheless, has suggested that the original author of the *Malay Annals* did not inconceivably make a mistake in using the word “*pertuturan*” but was indeed saying that the work was written “on the day the conversation among the chiefs” took place (Cheah 2009: 13). But this view is also misleading because it is inconceivable to think that the word “*pertuturan*”, bearing the meaning of “conversation”, was in common usage even by the seventeenth century, for nowhere else in the *Sejarah Melayu* is the word “*pertuturan*” being used, except to mean “family” or “genealogy”. Whatever the case may be, it would be too presumptuous for anyone to believe that the original author could have made careless mistakes in his preface after having just begun a few lines.

It was several decades ago that Roolvink pointed out that the word “*pertuturan*” exists in the Toba Batak language. In their language, “*pertuturan*” (from “*tutur*”) means “family” or having kindred ties. The verb “*martutur*” renders the meaning of “to relate the genealogy of each other’s relative in order to determine the family connection” (Sinaga 1996: 362). But even though the root word “*tutur*” in the Toba Batak language also means “relative” or “having familial relationship”, or “the act of mutual narration of each other’s genealogies with the purpose of understanding the family connections” (Sinaga 1996: 362), the Javanese meaning, nonetheless, is more correct, namely: “realize fully, memory, to be conscious, to recall or to reflect on as well as reminding, admonition, exhortation, advice, or to bring up memories”

(Wojowasito 1977: 280; Zoetmoelder & Robson 1982 [2]: 2085). They are much closer and more appropriate for the intended meaning of the *Malay Annals*.

Based on the above argument we are convinced that only a person who was very well-versed or acquainted with the Old Javanese language could have used such a phrase as “*pada [h]ari pertuturan [sic, ‘pituturan’]*”. In English, the full title of the work would be “*Sulalat u’s-Salatin*, that is, the history-cum-memorial [or genealogy] of Kings”. It was only much later, that is, after the *Sejarah Melayu* had supposedly already been rewritten by Tun Bambang (as claimed by some scholars) that the word “*pertuturan*” was used by other copyists⁵² and later misinterpreted by Winstedt. But this misreading of the word “*pertuturan*” appeared to have been accepted by almost all copyists of the other versions of the *Malay Annals*, namely the Abdullah and Shellabear versions, and even most probably the redaction used by John Leyden for his translation into English. The only exception is the redaction quoted by Marsden from the writings of Petrus van der Vorm.⁵³ The Krusenstern MS is nonetheless not clear about the word because its copyists had written “*perturan*” [p-r-t-w-r-a-n] instead of “*pertuturan*”. What then can we deduce from this difference in the usage of the word? It is clear that the word “*pertuturan*” (also “*petuturan*”) used in the Raffles 18 has not been understood or recognised by many other copyists and later editors of the *Sejarah Melayu* as Old Javanese, which means to keep in mind, to remind someone, to address, or to advise.⁵⁴ The absence of this word with its meaning in Kawi in most versions of the *Malay Annals* is an indication that they were copied at a later date.

Conclusion

To the Malays, the *Malay Annals* is a special literary heritage. Its importance is evident from the numerous variants of the early text produced since the early seventeenth (or earlier) until the end of the nineteenth centuries. While the above discussion has attempted to deliberate on the origins and authorship of the *Malay Annals*, further studies need to be done, for not all aspects of the diverse texts have been fully investigated. While the Raffles 18 may have been regarded by many as the earliest existing copy of the *Malay Annals* that, according to some, was revised by Tun Bambang in 1612, it was certainly not the earliest text of the *Sejarah Melayu*. The above study has tried to show that the compilers of the *Malay Annals* were many and that they came from different periods and places in the Malay-speaking region. It seems that the various texts of the *Malay Annals* also share a common characteristic, that is: the short (standard) version that end with a chapter on the invasion of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511 and the killing of Tun Ali Hati. As time passed by and other author-editors had come and gone, the *Malay Annals* also experienced redactions and interpolations. It is therefore logical to infer that the interpolations made by the author-editors to include events after the ascendancy of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah (son of Mahmud Syah) as the first Sultan of Johor must have begun in and after 1612, where the ending episode of Tun Ali Hati’s death found in most of the redactions⁵⁵ was followed by the opening paragraph of the usual Malay *hikayat*, that is, “*Hatta Sultan Mahmud Syah pun memerintahkan kerajaan baginda, maka Tun Pikrama, anak Bendahara, dijadikan Bendahara bergelar Paduka Raja ...*” (After some time had elapsed, Sultan Mahmud Syah then set about bringing the administration of his kingdom into order and Tun Pikrama, son of the [former] Bendahara was appointed Bendahara, with the title *Paduka Raja* ...) Likewise, later on, Tun Seri Lanang who became Bendahara during the reign of Iskandar Muda at Aceh allegedly became the “author” and he too had a role in the interpolation of the *Annals*, as did many others who came after him.⁵⁶ But the most important issue that this essay has tried to raise is the question of authorship of the early text of the *Malay Annals* or *Sejarah Melayu*. We think that the *Sulatus-Salatin yakni* [that is to say] *Hari Pertuturan [sic, Pituturan] Segala Raja-Raja Melayu* was the work of a Malay author of Javanese ancestry. His beautiful description of the royal visit to the Majapahit court and his mastery of the Javanese language as reflected in the *kidung* or *tembang* betrays his identity as someone with exceptional talent in the language.

¹ I wish to record my appreciation and thanks to the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture of Malaysia, for

- giving me a grant to conduct research at the University of Leiden on the subject in 2011.
- ² The usage of this word and its several different meanings will be discussed below.
- ³ According to Raimy Che-Ross (*MBRAS* 2002 (75) 2: 30), there are 44 manuscripts altogether (both complete and incomplete) in various libraries in Europe, New Zealand, Malaysia and Indonesia.
- ⁴ Sri Tri Buana (lord of the three worlds) is also known as Bichitram, Sang Supraba, or Sang Nila Utama.
- ⁵ Henceforth Raffles 18, which was also translated into English and edited by C.C. Brown. The manuscript was later edited and transliterated into Rumi by Abdul Rahman Ismail, who published it in 1995. Two years after that, the Raffles 18 was edited by Muhammad Haji Salleh.
- ⁶ Henceforth Farquhar 5.
- ⁷ Henceforth Krusenstern MS.
- ⁸ A more complete discussion of the Krusenstern MS can be found in Chapter 3.
- ⁹ According to the Raffles 18 he was named Raja 'Ala'uddin Syah after he was born (Brown 1970: 165).
- ¹⁰ "Pasar" is an Old Javanese word meaning "cemetery" or "graveyard". In the context of the above sentence, "pasar" does not mean "market". See Zoetmulder (2000 [2]: 788).
- ¹¹ A similar claim was also made by F. W. Douglas, in which ar-Raniri met Tun Seri Lanang in Aceh (Douglas 1949: 33). But we think that such claims are rather far-fetched since there is no written evidence that Tun Seri Lanang was really the *Bendahara Paduka Raja* referred to. Furthermore, Tun Seri Lanang was no longer around when ar-Raniri was in Aceh in 1637. The *Adat Aceh* recorded the presence of chiefs with titles like *Paduka Raja*, *Paduka Tuan*, *Tuan [Tun] Seberang*, which did not necessarily refer to Tun Seri Lanang (E.U.L. MSS. 459). One should not forget that there was more than one *Bendahara Paduka Raja* of Johor. The *Sejarah Melayu* itself stated that the son of Tun Seri Lanang, Tun Jenal, was also nicknamed *Bendahara Paduka Raja* and called "Datuk Sekudai". See Ahmat Adam (2016: 275-276).
- ¹² See below for further elaboration.
- ¹³ "Agra" in Kawi means "the supreme", "most important", or "the most significant", "premier"; but the word "agraja" means "the eldest", "first-born" (Zoetmulder 2000 [1]: 13, 14).
- ¹⁴ Translation based on Brown (1983: 1-2).
- ¹⁵ The non-compulsory *Duha* prayers which some Muslims perform in the late morning, viz. between 8.00 and 10.00 o' clock.
- ¹⁶ This will be discussed below.
- ¹⁷ From the Acehnese word "sagoe" which is pronounced /sagi/ (Malay: "segi") meaning the "end", "extreme point", "district", "village", by Aboe Bakar *et al.* (2001: 832-833).
- ¹⁸ /m/h/m/d/ may also be pronounced "Muhammad".
- ¹⁹ Malay: *perkunjaklah* (also *pergonjaklah*). (Wilkinson 1959 (2): 626).
- ²⁰ See preface in Ahmat Adam (2016: 3-7).
- ²¹ "Uleebalang" in Acehnese refers to the chief of the army or the territorial chief. It is also a title for the Sultan's *orang besar*, referring to the people in authority in the Sultan's district (Aboe Bakar *et al.* 2001: 1035).
- ²² "Goa" probably refers to a place in the Lhokseumawe region in northern Aceh. This writer thinks that Winstedt's assumption that "Goa" refers to the state in India is very misleading.
- ²³ This is the correct name of the half-brother of Johor's second Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah. Sultan Abdullah Ma'ahat or Ma'ayat Syah is actually the correct reading, for "Mughayat" does not exist in the Arabic vocabulary. "Hamat Syah" is of course the corrupted European pronunciation of his name.
- ²⁴ See Chapter 26 of the *Sejarah Melayu* (Shellabear 1981: 148).
- ²⁵ It happened during the reign of the Acehnese Sultan, 'Ala'uddin al-Kahar (r. 1537-71).
- ²⁶ In at least six other versions of the *Malay Annals* the name "Mahmud" was mentioned. See for example Malay MSS 1 (*Sejarah Melayu*) kept at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Farquhar 5 and the Cod. Or. 12026 at the Leiden University Library, the MS 86 DBP, the incomplete transliterated version in Rumi of *Sejarah Melayu* known as the E. U. L. MSS. Or. 458, New College 132, a microfilm copy of which Mkm 644 is available at Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia and the Raffles MS No. 35.
- ²⁷ "Temenggung" was the title of a high-ranking royal official responsible for keeping the peace in the realm. His superior was the *Datuk Bendahara*. See Soetan Mohammad Zain, *Kamus Modern Bahasa Indonesia*, Jakarta: Grafika [1960?].
- ²⁸ On f. 147 (2) of the Krusenstern MS, however, the copyists erroneously wrote that Tun Mahmud, nicknamed *Paduka Raja*, was the husband of Tun Genggang. In the same sentence the copyists wrote that they begot a son named Tun Mamat or Mamut (m-m-t) [ممت] bearing the title "*Bendahara Paduka Raja*". He married Tun Aminah. The copyists of the Krusenstern MS seemed confused when they wrote, "As for Tun Kedut, the grandson of *Seri Amar Bangsa*, Tun Pang (p-ng) [پڬ], is the one called the *Datuk Bendahara* who left for Aceh (see Ahmat Adam 2016: 276). In other parts of the manuscript, however, the phrase "the one who left for Aceh" was clearly in reference to Tun Seri Lanang.
- ²⁹ The Jawi spelling, p-a-s-r / r-a-j is read by many as "Pasir Raja". Both the Shellabear version and the John Rylands manuscript, however, say that after clearing the area, a settlement with a fortress made of Kulim timber at the Riun River was converted into a market. But "Pasar Raja" in Kawi actually means "Kubur Raja" (Royal Cemetery). See also Gibson-Hill 1956 (a):126.
- ³⁰ This is more or less verified by the *Sejarah Melayu* which described him as having no interest in the serious work of governance, but instead occupied himself with pleasures and entertainment, such as spending his time drinking and eating with the young *hulubalang* of his court. See MSS 1 at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester.
- ³¹ He was seen in the Singapore Strait in 1616 (Gibson-Hill 1956 (a): 137; Tiele, 1876: 303).
- ³² The Acehnese Royal Instruction or "*Sarakata*", which according to some people was written during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (known as Makota Alam), but had since been revised over the years under different rulers, mentioned that the order to appoint the *Bendahara* to administer the territory of Samalanga was given by Sultan Iskandar Muda. According to the *Sarakata*, the rights to inherit the territory of Samalanga by the descendants of the unnamed *Teuku Bendahara* were proclaimed on 7th May 1868 during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Mansur Syah. See Daud and Sakti (2010: 202). On

commentaries on the said *Sarakata*, see Crecelius and Beradow (1979: 51-53).

- ³³ Based on the *Adat Aceh* manuscript, we know that it was not uncommon for members of the Malay ruling elite to settle in Aceh after having been taken as prisoners of war. Among them were the Malay chiefs from Perak, Kedah and Pahang. See the *Adat Aceh* (copied by Orang Kaya Maharaja Melayu Paduka Seri Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ahmad Syah) in E.U.L. MSS Or. 459, a microfilm copy of which Mkm 644 is available at the Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia.
- ³⁴ The Farquhar 5, the Abdullah and Shellabear recensions, and the MS 86 DBP (Munsiy Mohamad Ally's MS) used by Abdul Samad Ahmad do not have these words in the preface.
- ³⁵ Cod. Or. 3199 (3), part 4. See Appendix 1: *Cerita asal raja2 Melayu punya keturunan* in Roolvink 1967 (3): 301–324. Roolvink says that van der Vorm and Valentyn could have used this manuscript or a similar source of its kind.
- ³⁶ In the Shellabear edition, Narrative 11 is about the arrival of Raja Iskandar in Muar, while in the Krusenstern MS, it is about the *Keling* country and its Raja, Pahili.
- ³⁷ In another version of the *Malay Annals*, the copyist claimed that it was written on 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1023 H (22 April 1614) which happened to be a Tuesday. See E.U.L. MSS. Or. 458 New College 132. Mkm 644 Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia.
- ³⁸ For example, in the Krusenstern MS and the Abdullah redaction (Narrative 17), the name *Datuk Sekudai* actually refers to someone who, according to Winstedt, was around in 1640 and that Mansur Syah became Sultan of Perak only in 1654 (Narrative 26). This would mean that the chapters concerned were written or interpolated after the said dates.
- ³⁹ The poem in the Krusenstern MS also has seven instead of eight lines. It is possible, however, that the mistake was committed not by the original redactor, but by the 1798 copyists.
- ⁴⁰ Personal communication with Dr Stuart Robson of Sydney, Australia. He says that the type of Javanese used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was Middle and New Javanese.
- ⁴¹ Especially Narratives 1–9. Narrative 9 has several lines of Javanese *tembang*, or lyrical poetry. See Brown (1983: 69–71).
- ⁴² In fact the practice of engaging writers of Javanese descent was also done by a notable seventeenth-century Sufi from Patani named Syekh Fakeh Ali bin Muhammad bin Safiuddin al-Fatani, who sought the assistance of someone from Bogor, West Java, who was then living in the residence of the Sultan of Patani, in writing the *Tarikh Patani* (The History of Patani). See Malik (2006: 21).
- ⁴³ Even during the early period of Portuguese rule, one of the *syahbandars* of the Melaka harbour was a Javanese, who had jurisdiction over junks from the Moluccas, Banda, Palembang, Tanjung Pura, Brunei and Luzon. The Javanese were active traders and had their own bazaar. They lived in the Upeh district, not too far away from their bazaar. The “*Jawah*” community in Melaka also included Sundanese from West Java, and those from Tuban and Japara. They also lived in the vicinity of Banda Hilir, together with the Malays. See Thomaz (2000: 24, 48–49, 73–74).
- ⁴⁴ The legacy of continuing the *Malay Annals* from time to time had been practised up to the late nineteenth century, as evident by the work of Tengku Said of Siak. See the facsimile of the *Malay Annals* (Codex Orientalis, Leiden 7304) written in 1893 in Yusoff Hashim, (1998).
- ⁴⁵ For those who have no knowledge of Javanese, the word “*pertuturan*” which in Malay means “conversation” would give a peculiar meaning if translated into English: “to make a chronicle on the ‘day of conversation’ of all kings”.
- ⁴⁶ Emphasis added by this writer.
- ⁴⁷ It is an emphatic particle (e.g. “of”) for nouns and pronouns etc. used in both Javanese and Sundanese to bring out in full, which otherwise would be rendered by intonation. “*Hari*” can also take several word forms in the Kawi language. It can be “*arih*”, “*ari*”, or “*harih*”, all bearing, among others, the old meaning of “to soothe” or “to address with soothing or consoling words”. “*Hari*” also implies a time frame which is “*ketika*” in Malay, or “a point of time”. See (Zoetmoelder & Robson (1982: (1) 125–126; Hardjadibrata 2003: 37; Mardiwarsito 1981: 212).
- ⁴⁸ See (Zoetmulder & Robson 1982 (1): 594–595; Prawiroatmodjo, 1957: 165; Mardiwarsito 1978: 75, 212; Satjadibrata 1950: 26)
- ⁴⁹ Emphasis added.
- ⁵⁰ The word “*pertuturan*” has been misconstrued by Winstedt as a spelling error for the word “*peraturan*”. By calling the *Malay Annals* “*Peraturan Segala Raja-Raja*” (The Order or Conventions of Malay Rajas), Winstedt had inadvertently misled many people, including Malays.
- ⁵¹ This word was used by Marsden who quoted Petrus van der Vorm. The latter could have obtained a copy of the *Malay Annals* that had “*perturunan*” as its subtitle. The word “*pertuturan*” was also used by the copyists of the Krusenstern MS who however misspelt or shortened it to “*perturan*” [p-r-t-w-r-a-n]. Similarly “*pertuturan*” seemed to have been shortened to “*perturan*” [p-r-t-w-r-n] by both the copyists of the Malay MS 1 and the Raffles 35 (“*perturun*”, which would not be appropriate in the context); but the latter had also written “*perteturan*” [p-r-t-t-w-r-n] (a corrupted form of “*pertuturan*”, no doubt) with regard to the command given; on the other hand, the writer of MS 1 used “*peraturan*” when describing the command of the Raja. Abdul Rahman Ismail's reading of “*perturan*” [p-r-t-w-r-n] in the Raffles 35 as “*peraturan*” or “*perturun*” [p-r-t-w-r-n] is certainly incorrect. See Abdul Rahman Ismail (2008: 12).
- ⁵² The Farquhar 5 also has the words *Sulalat uš-Salatin*, yakni *perturunan segala raja-raja* as its title. An incomplete copy of the *Malay Annals* in Rumi transliteration using Dutch orthography, however, used the word “*pertuturan*” and the date given for the revision is 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1023 H (22 April 1614). See E.U.L. MS Or. 458, Mkm 644, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia.
- ⁵³ Since Marsden himself had not seen the text of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the word “*penurunan*” could also be a misnomer by the Dutch writer Petrus van der Vorm. Marsden, while quoting Valentyn's and Werndly's works, also mentioned John Leyden's paper as one of his sources when he revised and published the third edition of his *History of Sumatra* in 1811 (See Marsden 1986: 326).
- ⁵⁴ Incidentally the meaning of the root word “*tutur*” in the language of the Sundanese people in West Java, also includes: “to follow or to keep track of”, “succession of happenings”, “genealogy”, “history” and “moralising instruction (advice or reminder)” (Hardjadibrata 2003: 857; Tamsyah 1996: 264).
- ⁵⁵ See redactions by Abdullah Munsiy and Shellabear and the Krusenstern MS. Even the Palembang MS in Rumi that is kept at the Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, has a similar ending.

⁵⁶ There were further interpolations when other versions were produced, resulting in the blending of the short and long versions into hybrid texts. Texts produced in the Riau-Lingga kingdom following the ascendancy of Bugis political power and influence after 1720 even had the account of Hang Tuha being a Bugis princeling from Mempawa. Another later redaction, namely the Tunku Said version, had also added events that stretched up to the occasion when Tengku Akil of Siak attacked Palembang, which led to the demise of Sultan Abdul Jalil of Sukadana. It is however worth noting that despite the interpolations and additions of this version by Tengku Said in 1893, the new *Hikayat Melayu* still maintained the structure of the *Malay Annals* which repeated the popular narrative that Malay history began with the story of Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn (discussed further in Chapter 2).

The early history of Melaka according to the text of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*

Introduction

Until today, there are no less than a dozen complete recensions of the *Sulalat us-Salatin* that have been published since the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹ Many of these recensions are found to be based on two principal manuscript versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*: namely those that bear the name of Tun Seri Lanang as the purported author (including the Krusenstern MS), and the more studied version, the Raffles 18.² The Tun Seri Lanang version had been edited by François Valentyn, possibly around the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. Other versions published were that of Leyden (1821), Abdullah Munsyi (1840/41), Dulaurier (1849), Shellabear (1896 and 1898), Aman gelar Datuk Madjo Indo (1959), A. Samad Ahmad (1979), Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1998), the Krusenstern MS, and others. The latter was translated by E. V. Revunenkova into Russian and was published in 2008 as her doctoral thesis, along with a facsimile of the original manuscript. It was by using this facsimile that this writer transliterated its Jawi text into Rumi and subsequently edited and annotated it, as well as added an introduction.

Of the main versions of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, the Raffles 18 (supposedly completed in 1612, also known as the “1535 version”) appears to have received greater attention. Many of those who have worked on it seem to agree with Winstedt’s opinion that the Raffles 18 is the oldest, since the events narrated had taken place during the reign of the first Sultan of Johor, Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, son of Melaka’s Sultan Mahmud Syah. This version ends with a narrative on the peace treaty signed between the Portuguese and the Malay sultanate as a result of the latter’s defeat in Johor in 1535. In comparison, other versions (known as the standard version), including the Abdullah Munsyi copy (1840/41) and the Krusenstern MS (1798), end with the narrative of Tun Ali Hati asking Sultan Mahmud Syah to end his life following the killing of his “master” Sultan Ahmad. These versions were supposedly authored by Tun Seri Lanang. Even the Jawi edition by Shellabear (1896) ends with Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah, the son of Sultan ‘Ali Jalla ‘Abdul Jalil Syah, founding his kingdom at Pasir [or Pasar]³ Raja, concluding with the statement of Johor being attacked by Jambi. Meanwhile, the recension by Shellabear has been described as a hybrid text. According to Roolvink, one of the texts used by Shellabear was the Maxwell no. 26 manuscript.⁴

Not all versions of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* have been studied, though. For purposes of making comparisons, this writer has only managed to make use of the Raffles 18, the Krusenstern MS (now kept in Saint Petersburg, Russia), Abdullah Munsyi’s printed text of 1840/41, the Shellabear recension in Rumi and the Raffles MS. 39, which was copied in March 1812 with the name of Ibrahim bin Kandu written in its colophon.⁵ Another version referred to is the Or. Manuscript 14734, that was copied in 1873.

The Raffles 18 was copied in the early nineteenth century. Its text ends with the narrative of Patih Ludang,⁶ who was murdered by Sang Setia and Sultan Muzafar Syah before his departure to Pahang to request that Sultan Alauddin Ri’ayat Syah, son of Sultan Mahmud, return all the tribesmen (*sakai*) of Patih Ludang to Muzafar himself. After the story of the killing of Tun Ali Hati, found in the standard version, there are more narratives in the Raffles 18, beginning with the twenty-fourth and ending with the thirty-first narrative. Here, Winstedt transplanted eight narratives taken from the Blagden manuscript. This part of the Raffles 18 version shares similarities with the manuscript owned by Sultan Abdul Rahman Syah of Lingga. Based on my own comparative study of the content structure of several manuscripts, I have come to the conclusion that with the exception of the extended version of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* (also called the

long version), most copies conform to the standard version, ending with the Portuguese conquest of Melaka and the killing of Tun Ali Hati. Unknown to many scholars, the Krusenstern MS mentioned earlier is a prototype of the standard version.

Because of their many similarities, I am certain that both the Raffles 18 and the Krusenstern MS were copied from two different texts, but have a common master text. The most obvious similarity is the sentence in the Raffles 18 that goes “during the reign of His Highness Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah ...” (without mentioning the name of Sultan ‘Ali Jalla), while the Krusenstern MS goes “... during the reign of the late ruler who died in Aceh, His Highness Sultan ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah *zilullah fil ‘alam*, son of Sultan Mahmud Syah ...”. As to when the master text was written, there is no one who can authenticate the exact date. However, Winstedt suggested that the original copy was likely to have been written by a polyglot who lived in Melaka during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Syah, and had witnessed for himself the events leading up to the conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese.⁷

In general, scholars of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* are well aware that the existing versions of the work are actually only later copies of the original, and that many of them have been rewritten since the beginning of the early nineteenth century, or the late eighteenth century at the earliest, such as the Krusenstern MS.⁸ Over time, every version could include interpolations by individual copyists. It is thus difficult to really identify which versions are closer to the original. Nevertheless, based on the narratives describing certain historical or memorable incidents, one may speculate whether the text of a particular version is nearer to the truth. If foreign contemporary sources could be consulted (such as the records of the *Ming Shi-lu*),⁹ more accurate historical information may be obtained. Thus, the Krusenstern MS could have been the recopied version of a master text of all versions that have Tun Seri Lanang mentioned as their supposed author. While there is a tendency for researchers to believe that parts of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* had been written by different people during the reigns of different Sultans, there is the possibility of additions, continuations, updates and interpolations of narratives by different copyists in later periods, namely during the reigns of Sultan Mahmud Syah, ‘Sultan Alauddin Ri’ayat Syah (r. 1528–1646) and Sultan Abdullah Ma’iyat Syah¹⁰ (r. 1613–23) or those copied by different scribes in Lingga or Siak, Sambas or Melaka.

Despite the possibility of interpolations, one thing is clear though. The original author of the recollection-cum-exhortation of kings must have had a special motive, namely to extoll the greatness of the Melaka sultanate and the various rulers of the kingdom. He saw Melaka as his universe (Josselin de Jong, 1964: 236) and its rulers as members of a dynasty that possessed its own genealogy, having its beginnings in the legendary Alexander the Great, the mythical kings such as Raja Suran, Demang Lebar Daun and Sri Tri Buana or Sang Supraba, all narrated with the sole purpose of showing the continuity of its unbroken genealogy. In other words, the original author’s perception of history through the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* and his understanding of Malay historiography were intended to be a hagiography of Sultans – a pseudo-historical document that is functional in character.¹¹ It was precisely due to this aim that the author felt responsible to pick his selective “facts” in order to reject or ignore certain historical episodes if they were not congruent with his perception of a great sultanate and a praiseworthy ruler, even though such episodes could very well be factually valid for historical records. Like the Greek historian Herodotus, the original author of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* had not only invented the dialogues of his main characters, but included advisory insinuation and sarcasm to teach the rulers morality, in order to promote good character.

The *Sejarah Melayu* is not a work of history

That the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* cannot be regarded as a genuine history text, or equated in the same category with a true work of historiography, according to the history model espoused by Ibn Khaldun (27 May 1332 – 17 March 1406 CE) and Herodotus (485– 425 BCE), is generally recognised by contemporary historians. The narratives in such work of literature are a mixture of legends, myths and history. They are

interwoven in that manner because as the subtitle of the work reveals, the author wanted it to be “a book of remembrance, advice and counsel to the Malay rajas.” This aim is revealed by the usage of the Kawi word “*pituturan*” which has been misread by many as “*pertuturan*” (conversation), “*peraturan*” (rules), “*peturunan*” (descendants), and “*perturun*” (having a hereditary). The Kawi word, which appears to have been copied correctly by the copyist of the Raffles 18 viz. “*petuturan*” [or *pituturan*] (spelt /p/t/t/r/n/ [فترن] in Jawi), bears several meanings, namely: memory, recollection, to regain consciousness, to reflect on, remember, keep in mind, to bring to realisation, and to give an admonition. Thus, this is a work of literature which was originally written with the hidden intention to remind the Malay Rajas of the necessity to act with proper conduct and not to abuse their royal position.

Due to its nature of being a work of literature intermixed with myth, legend, fairytales (Brown 1948 (12): 730) and “historical information” which have been perceived and understood by the Malays as history,¹² it would therefore be futile for today’s historians to take it at face value. A comparative study of other sources needs to be considered seriously, such as the use of Chinese records and available Portuguese sources. In trying to understand Melaka’s early history before the coming of the Europeans, the historian therefore cannot afford to rely solely on the so-called *Sejarah Melayu* alone if any historical truth is to be gained.

The recent furore over the attempt by some Malaysian historians to use the *Sejarah Melayu* as a primary source for determining the founding date of the Melaka sultanate is a case in point (more on this below). Any attempt to interpret the *Sejarah Melayu*, even as a work of literature, needs careful reading of its text. The work contains multifarious forms of sarcasm, allegorical symbolism, as well as innuendos and insinuations by the author, which need to be understood by the reader when following the narratives. In addition to that is the problem of reading Old Jawi, in which the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* was written. In fact, the misreading of several words in the original Old Jawi have contributed towards the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the contents of the *Sejarah Melayu* among many copyists, readers and transliterators.

Not surprisingly, this has also posed an enigma for many scholars, especially over the fact that the Old Jawi letters are usually marked by the absence of vowels, and sometimes even the dots for certain *huruf* (letters) have been left out (or added), thus leading to the misreading of the words and the misinterpretation of their true meanings. Take for example the word “*Kaid*”, which is spelt in the Jawi letters /k/y/d/ [كيد]. Most readers have pronounced it “*Kida*”, as in “*Kida Hindi*”, even though the word is Persian and means “king”. Another example is “*Purna Lango*”, the name of the Prince of Tanjung Pura who was marooned at sea. “*Purna*” is a Kawi word meaning “overwhelming” or “perfect”; and “*lango*” in Kawi means “lovelorn”, “longing”, “pining” or “yearning for love”. But several transcribers have misread the word in Jawi as “*langu*”, which actually means “having a sickening smell” or “something that is revolting”. It makes no sense to name a person “*Prana Langu*” as John Leyden did, or “*Kirana Langu*” (“*Kirana*” means “beam of light”, “ray”, or “moonbeam”) as Shellabear and Teuuw had transcribed, or “*Perlangu*” as Winstedt had read it, when the name “*Purna Lango*” really means “overwhelming feeling of longing for love”.

The presence of many Kawi words in the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* has largely been ignored by many recensionists, be they European or Malay transcribers. It is not surprising that the important instruction expressed by the Ruler in the Lower Reaches (*Yang Dipertuan di Hilir*) to the then writer of the *Sejarah Melayu*, which was “that we request a chronicle be composed to address the younger brothers and distant relatives of various stations and ranks with soothing words for all Malay Rajas and their ceremonials, for remembrance, so that our descendants will hear and learn every word of it” (*Bahawa hamba minta diperbuatkan hikayat pada hari pituturan segala raja-raja Melayu dengan istiadatnya supaya didengar oleh anak cucu kita yang kemudian dari kita dan diketahuinyalah segala perkataan*) has been eluded. The Kawi words used have been misread and mistranslated by Brown (1952: 12) and misread by others, such that the Kawi words “*pada hari pituturan*” have been misconstrued by several transcribers and editors who read or translated them as “to the *Bendahara* the conversation (“*pertuturan*”) of the Malay rajas”

(Muhammad Haji Salleh 1997: 3; A. Samad Ahmad 1986: 3); or “to the Bendahara the rules” (Winstedt 1938: 42), and “on the day of the conversation” (Abdul Rahman Ismail 2009: 65–66). Brown’s reading of the words “pada hari” is “bendahari” (Treasury). So, his translation becomes: “It is my wish that the Treasury shall make a chronicle setting forth the genealogy of the Malay Rajas and the ceremonials of their courts for the information of my descendants who come after me ...” (Brown 1952: 12).

Another misconception that has come to light is the misreading by most transcribers of the Kawi word “*pecat*” (which actually means to “unsheath”). The misreading occurs in the sentence that Brown (1952: 77) translated: “He also gave forty other creeses [*sic*] to the Raja of Melaka’s suite: the sheaths of all these creeses [*sic*] were broken”. Actually, the author never meant that the sheaths of the krises were broken. What he meant was the krises were to be unsheathed from their scabbards. Like most other transcribers, Brown had misread and wrongly transcribed the Kawi word “*pecat*” as “*pecah*” (“broken”). These are only a few examples about the misreading of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*. The presence of several Kawi words used by the original author of the *Sejarah Melayu* that have until now largely been ignored by most recensionists have already been pointed out by this writer in his study of the Krusenstern MS of 1798 (Ahmat Adam 2016: xxxix–xl).

Iskandar Dhu’l-Qarnayn and Sang Supraba in the *Sejarah Melayu*

The *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* starts by introducing the character of Iskandar Dhu’l-Qarnayn (lit. “he of the two horns”) as ruler of the East and the West, followed by (in some versions) the second narrative of the arrival of the mythical Supraba (from Sanskrit “Suprabha”), which in all versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* is spelt [سڤرڤا] (/s/p/r/b/) in Jawi. This word has been misread by transcribers as “Sapurba”, “Sipurba”, “Separba” or “Si Parba” for at least two centuries or more. Based on my study of the Krusenstern MS¹³ and after having made comparisons with other versions, I am now quite convinced that the word is actually “Supraba” which means “very bright or splendid”, “glorious”, or “having a good appearance”. “Supraba” is also another name for the Buddha,¹⁴ and he is said to be the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, the Hindu god of protection. In the Krusenstern MS, his other name is Bichitram (from Sanskrit “Vicitra”¹⁵) and his emergence at Bukit Siguntang is accompanied by that of two other princes, Nila Pahlawan and Karna Pandeyan (Nila Pandita, Krishna Pandeyan or Karna Pandita in some other versions, all referring to Vishnu). All of them claimed descent from Raja Iskandar (Alexander the Great), king of the world. By naming these divine personalities as merely individuals, and not identifying them by their religions, it clearly shows that the unknown author of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* had no intention of projecting the prior establishment of Buddhism or any of the Vishnavite systems of belief in a Malay region. Therefore, in the same line of thinking, the said author also found it convenient to ignore the use of the princely title, Parameswara,¹⁶ to refer to the first ruler of Melaka. Instead, the prince from Palembang was renamed Iskandar Syah. The Persian word “*Syah*” was affixed to the name, Iskandar, to mean “king”, “sovereign prince”, “noble” or “great” (Steingass 2012: 768). So “Iskandar Syah” was actually meant to be a translation of the name Alexander the Great.

The *Sejarah Melayu* and Islam

The *Sejarah Melayu* is silent over the religion of Iskandar. But in every version, there is a chapter on the conversion of Měurah Silo of Pasai to Islam after meeting the Prophet Muhammad in a dream. Upon becoming a Muslim, Měurah Silo’s name was changed to Sultan Maliku’s-Salih. This episode appeared to have inspired the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* to narrate the story of Raja Kecik Besar [*sic*], the grandson of Iskandar Syah, to succeed his father, Raja Besar Muda. Upon ascending the throne, Raja Kecik Besar (or according to the Raffles 18, Raja Tengah), also encountered the Prophet Muhammad in a dream. After his conversion, Raja Kecik Besar then adopted the name Sultan Muhammad Syah, whom the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* portrayed as the first Muslim Raja of Melaka. But like his attempt to hide the Sivaist name

of Parameswara, the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* had purposely chosen the name “Muhammad Syah” to camouflage the name, Sri Maharaja, (which in Sanskrit means “the lustre of the great king”). The historical Sri Maharaja, the nephew of Parameswara, visited China in 1424 and reigned in Melaka until 1444 or 1445.

Muhammad Syah converting to Islam: Is it a myth?

It seems most likely that the story of Sultan Muhammad Syah converting to Islam was just a myth created by the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* from the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*. The creation of the myth was not merely for the purpose of camouflaging the identity of Sri Maharaja (a Hindu epithet), but more so to designate the first ruler of Melaka (i.e. Parameswara) as being a converted Muslim himself.

Similarly, another episode in the *Chronicle of Pasai* that impressed the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* was the founding of Pasai, which originated from an incident where “Si Pasai”, King Měurah Silo’s hunting dog, had at first tried to catch a mousedeer standing on a high ground in the forest facing the shore. But upon being challenged by the mousedeer, the dog retreated, but when the dog saw the mousedeer turning back, the dog then ran up to it and embraced it about seven times. The king was so amazed that he took it as a good omen and decided to build a city in the area. Knowing this story, the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* also created the story of the origin of the name “Melaka”.¹⁷

As the story goes, while Iskandar Syah was hunting one of his hounds was kicked by a white mousedeer. He thought that incident of the mousedeer beating a dog was a good sign for him to build a city in the area, and so he asked one of the chiefs about the name of the tree that he was standing under. When told that it was called the “Melaka” tree he decided to name the city after the tree.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the meaning of the word “Melaka” has had different interpretations. One interpretation says that “Melaka” is a corruption of the Arabic word “*malaka*” [ملك], which means “to take in possession”, “to take over”, “to acquire”, “to seize”, or “to be the owner” (Cowan [Hans Wehr 1991: 1081]). In the Persian language, “*malakat*” [ملاکت] also means “possession” (Steingass 2012: 1804). On the other hand, when the word is pronounced and spelt “*malaqat*” [ملاقات] in Persian, it means “meeting” or “encountering”. Those who believe in this interpretation forget that around 1399 or 1400, there were no Arabs or Persians in the said area. Thus, just as the naming of Melaka after a tree is fictional, the story of Sultan Muhammad Syah in the *Sejarah Melayu* is also very likely to be fictional. Furthermore, there is no record in the *Ming Shi-lu* that Muhammad Syah had come to visit the emperor. Instead it was Sri Maharaja who did so in 1424. But long before Sri Maharaja ascended the throne, Islam had already set foot in the kingdom.

The coming of Islam to Melaka is more reliably told in Ma Huan’s work, *Ying-Yai Sheng Lan*, which was published in 1453. According to Ma Huan, who was a Muslim himself and a translator and interpreter for Zheng He,¹⁹ his first expedition was made with Zheng He’s fourth expedition of 1413–15. The expedition, which was to visit Champa, Java, Palembang and Melaka, Samudera, Ceylon, Calicut and Hormuz, must have arrived in Melaka either in late 1413 or before October 1414, because in his description about the country of Melaka, Ma Huan reported that the king of the country of Melaka and the people had during that time “all followed the Islamic religion” (J. V. Mills 1970: 110). Ma Huan noted that they performed fasting, doing penance (*tawba*) and daily prayers (*salat*). Since Parameswara was still ruler of Melaka²⁰ before September or October 1414, it would be logical to assume that he was the Muslim king referred to by Ma Huan. Furthermore, as reported in the *Ming Shi-lu* of 5 October 1414, Megat Iskandar Syah had visited the emperor in Beijing, where he announced the demise of his father, Parameswara.²¹ However, even if one were to hypothesise that Ma Huan’s stay in Melaka was in late 1414 (for he returned to China in 1415), and that the reigning ruler then was Megat Iskandar Syah, it is still logical to assume that Islam had set foot for quite some time in Melaka, most likely towards the end of Parameswara’s reign.²²

Parameswara must have converted to Islam before he died and took the name (or rather appellation) of Muhammad, thus prompting the unknown author of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* to create the myth of Sultan

Muhammad Syah, a story that was inspired by the conversion of Měurah Silo, who after meeting the prophet in a dream had recited the *syahadah* (the Islamic confession of faith)²³ and was subsequently asked to adopt the name Sultan Malik u's-Salih, a title meaning "the pious king". Regarding the mythical name chosen by the author, I agree with Syed Naquib al-Attas (al-Attas 2011: 61) that the name "Muhammad", which may be translated as "highly praised one" (Steingass 2012: 1190), could only be an appellation for someone of high disposition, such as a king.²⁴ Thus the author concocted the story of the conversion of the first ruler of Melaka to avoid mentioning the name "Parameswara". It was also precisely to demonstrate that the first ruler of Melaka finally became a Muslim with the *gelar* (appellation) of "Muhammad", and that the name Iskandar Syah or Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn was consistent with his use of the Qur'anic "Dhu'l-Qarnayn" as the founder of the Melaka kingdom.

By making Iskandar head of the Melaka kingdom, the author established Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn as the alter ego of Sang Supraba, Sri Tri Buana, Nila Pahlawan, Bichitram Syah and Sang Nila Utama who had all, according to the different versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, contributed towards the founding of kingdoms such as Minangkabu, Tanjung Pura, Bentan, Tumasik (or Singapura) and eventually, Melaka. The author was attempting to show that the genealogical history of the Malay rulers had really begun in Palembang, and continued even after Melaka was conquered by the Portuguese. Even so, their genealogy continued up to the period of the establishment of Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah's reign in Johor Lama. During this time, a request was made to rewrite the copy of the *Sejarah Melayu*.

Just about half a century ago, the late Professor Oliver Wolters had already proposed the theory that the genealogical history of the Melaka rulers had taken place continuously without interruption, to the extent that the history of Iskandar Syah's (Parameswara's) sojourn in Singapore was fictionalised in order to provide an uninterrupted continuity of his reign from Palembang to Melaka.²⁵ To Wolters, Parameswara's departure from Palembang parallels the withdrawal of Sri Tri Buana or Sang Supraba from Palembang to "look for the sea", which eventually led him to Bentan and Tumasik.

The author also stated that Sang Supraba who also bore the title of "Tramberi²⁶ Tribuana" (a holy title for a prince who ruled over three worlds *viz.* the heavens, earth and the world under), was in fact lord as well as symbol of the Hindu/Buddhist and Vishnavite religions. As a pious Muslim,²⁷ the author appeared to perceive that Dhu'l-Qarnayn had a similar attribute or powerful status to Tramberi Tribuana. Perhaps the author was not unaware of the existence of one hadith that had reportedly stated: "Dhu'l-Qarnayn had been visited by an angel who ascended with him through the sky until he could see the whole of the earth and the fathomless sea that commands the world" (Seyyed Hussein Nasr: 2017: 756) – which in fact echoes the attributes that Tramberi Tribuana possessed.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn's name is found in the Holy Qur'an, and his story of heroism is illuminated further in the *Hikayat Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn*, which the author must have relied on to narrate the story of an imagined historical figure, said to have been the great ancestor of the Malay kings. It is also not improbable that the said author had used the *Hikayat Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn* to create the story of Ka'id Hindi giving his daughter up to be married to Iskandar with the help of the Prophet Khidr, according to the ordinance [*syariat*] of Prophet Abraham. As stated in the narrative, after the wedding, Iskandar took the princess along when he set forth for the East.

For the author, the name "Iskandar" is symbolic of a perfect Muslim. As a matter of fact, most commentators of the Qur'an consider Dhu'l-Qarnayn a righteous king who was nonetheless granted miraculous means for conquering the world and was spoken to directly by God (verse 86 of Surah *al-Kahf*). As verified by Surah *Al-Kahf* in the Holy Qur'an, Dhu'l-Qarnayn is also known as "the man whose travels encompassed the east and the west". To pious Muslims, *Hikayat Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn* had been written because he was considered by some to be a prophet of God. Among students of the Holy Qur'an, however, there were those who believed that [Iskandar] Dhu'l-Qarnayn was a prehistoric king and a contemporary of Abraham; even though such a view of the man was more of speculation and legend than the real historic person. But to most commentators of the Qur'an, Dhu'l-Qarnayn was considered to be Alexander the Great (Seyyed Hossein Nasr 2017: 756–757).

Among Muslims, the name Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn evokes several perceptions. One *hadith* identifies him as a youth from Rum (i.e. the western lands) who built the Egyptian city of Alexandria. Some Qur'anic scholars have identified him as the ancient Persian king Cyrus the Great. Some consider him to be just a righteous servant of God who had been granted sovereignty over the world along with knowledge and wisdom. Others suggest that he is a prophet or an angel. In both Islamic and Qur'anic history, the existence of Iskandar was one of the matters about which the Mekkans had questioned the Prophet, upon the advice of some Jewish scholars, whose counsel had been sought in trying to determine the truth of Muhammad's prophethood. It was based on this query of the Mekkans that God made the revelation through verse 84 of the Surah *al-Kahf*: "Truly, We established him in the land, and gave him the means to all things." It was based on this verse that the Persian thinker, al-Razi, explained: "When Dhu'l-Qarnayn desired something, he would follow these means to attain it" (ibid.).

The author's stand on Islam is clearly seen when he identified "Iskandar Syah" as the first ruler of Melaka/last ruler of Singapura. Similarly, he used the name "Suprabha" as another name for the Buddha to avoid mentioning the advent of Buddhism in Palembang and its surrounding areas in the seventh century. Besides mentioning the name Sang Supraba (or his alter ego, Bichitram) as just an ordinary individual, and giving him the important role in laying the foundation of Malay kingdom with Demang Lebar Daun, the author also described the arrival of two other princes who had arrived together with Supraba, emphatically pointing out that they were all descendants of Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn.

According to several versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, Supraba married the daughter of Demang Lebar Daun, named Sundari (meaning "the beautiful one") and had four children: two daughters called Sri Dewi and Candra Dewi, and two sons named Sang Maniaka and Sang Nila Utama. However, according to another version of the *Sejarah Melayu*, upon becoming the ruler of Tumasik, Sang Nila Utama renamed the island as Singapura, and took the title Sri Tri Buana. The image of Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn as the founding ancestor of the Malay kings is a symbolic attempt by the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* to show his great role as king of the East and the West in parallel with the role of Sang Supraba who became founder of the royal Malay legacy.

In all versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the author had tried to show without fail that the founding of the genealogy of the Melaka rulers began in Palembang. According to the author, this uninterrupted genealogical history of the Malay rulers was a result of the exploits of Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn's descendants, and thus it was Iskandar Syah who was in actual fact the founder of the Melaka sultanate. Based on this rationale, the author produced this work which he called "*pituturan segala raja-raja*" (memory-cum-admonition of Rajas). But besides trying to make the rulers remember their history, the author also wanted them to reflect on their past and to constantly keep past events in mind as well as to take whatever happened as an admonition. The purpose was also to advise them when it was due. Thus, the word "*pituturan*" clearly indicates that the literary work is actually not fully a book of history, but instead a work containing narratives for the rulers to reflect on and to remind them of their past.

Therefore, an attempt to use the Raffles 18 as a historical source by some local Malaysian scholars back in 2015, to back their unsubstantiated claim that Melaka as a polity was founded in 1262, lacks historical objectivity and honesty on their part. Not only are these historians unashamed of their embarrassing conclusive statement, but this writer has also been told that some of them have even cajoled some quarters in the Ministry of Education's Textbook Bureau to update the old date of 1400 as found in the current history textbooks for Malaysian schools. The said claim by the local historians is not based on solid research, but rather on a fake assumption, whereby they calculated the reigns of individual rulers of Melaka and backtracked them, starting from 1511 when the Sultan of Melaka abandoned his throne after the Portuguese invasion. For example, they concluded that Mahmud Syah ruled Melaka for 30 years. But the reign of the last Sultan varies between 30 and 32 years, depending on which version of the *Sejarah Melayu* is used.

Meanwhile, few scholars of Malaysian history have taken heed of the author of the *Sejarah Melayu*'s narrative about Sultan Ahmad Syah succeeding his father, Mahmud Syah, just before the Portuguese

invaded Melaka. This cannot be a myth because not too long ago, Malaysian archaeologists have discovered undated tin coins from Sultan Ahmad's reign.

The discrepancy in chronological dating brings into doubt the accuracy of the *Sejarah Melayu's* information about royal succession. For example, the Raffles 18 claims that the reign of Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah was 33 years, when the records of the *Ming Shi-lu* of 1481 and the *Rekidai hoan* that was dated 1480–1481 state that he only ruled for a period of no more than four years. Sultan Mansur Syah's reign is stated to have lasted 73 years, when his tombstone marked 1477 as the year of his death while his ascension to the throne was in 1459, according to the *Ming Shi-lu*. His predecessor, Sultan Muzaffar Syah is said to have ruled for 40 years even though the Chinese records indicate that he ruled Melaka for about 14 to 15 years.²⁸ As for the fictional Sultan Muhammad (alias Sri Maharaja), his reign was supposedly 57 years, while most versions state that it was 67 years. Again, this proves the unreliability of the *Sejarah Melayu's* chronology. Other unsubstantiated dates are the 17-month reign of Raja Ibrahim (nicknamed Sultan Abu Syahid), and the two-year rule of Sultan Megat or Raja Kecil Besar, the second ruler of Melaka.

Thus, if one were to add up the reigns of the different Melaka rulers, the total is 236 years and five months – which is indeed rather preposterous. Today, visitors who visit Melaka by road may have noticed that there are billboards erected in several places in the state announcing Melaka's age as being more than 750 years old. This method of calculating the founding date of Melaka was actually not pioneered by these few local historians but was first adopted by François Valentyn, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, who served in Ambon in the late seventeenth century. He used a version of the *Sejarah Melayu* as his principal source, most likely the earliest version of the *Sejarah Melayu* ever read by a European. In that version, it was mentioned that the first ruler of Melaka was a royal refugee from Singapura, where he had ruled for three years. Based on the information he acquired, Valentyn stated that Iskandar Syah reigned as king of Melaka for 22 years.²⁹ In his book published in 1726, Valentyn claimed that Melaka was founded in 1253. This was criticised by C.O. Blagden, who called the finding “hopelessly untenable.”³⁰ Blagden, who wrote “Notes on Malay History” in 1909, had unreservedly dismissed the date of Melaka's founding in the thirteenth century. He suggested its founding date was probably somewhere between 1377 and 1400 CE. He noted that Palembang was invaded by the Javanese in 1377. Shortly after that, Singapura and Ujung Tanah were also conquered by the Javanese. In his criticism of Valentyn's date, Blagden had already pointed out the “absurdly long reigns [of] the Melaka Rajas ... for instance four generations of them, from Sultan Muhammad Syah to Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah inclusive, are made to cover a space of 201 years; which is extremely improbable and next to impossible” (Blagden 1909: 139).

Obviously, the claim by the local historians that Melaka was founded in 1262 is naïve and very embarrassing, if not an insult to credible historians who are committed to writing Malaysian history based on historical evidence. One major fault that the local Malay historians committed is that they forgot that the *Sejarah Melayu* is unreliable insofar as chronological dating is concerned. These historians do not know when exactly Parameswara left Palembang. The *Sejarah Melayu* does not provide any information regarding this period.

When did the first ruler of Melaka leave Palembang?

According to the *Ming Shi-lu* dated 13 September 1377, following the death of King Da-ma-sha-na-a-zhe [Dharmasraya]³¹ (Wolters, 1970: 137), of San-fo-chi (Srivijaya), his son Ma-na-zhe Wu-li (Maharaja Buri) succeeded him as ruler of San fo-chi.³² Following that, a messenger was sent to China with a request to procure a seal from the emperor. But the report about Maharaja Buri being given a letter of recognition by China and the royal seal from the Hongwu Emperor was only recorded on 30th November 1377. These were delivered by the Chinese envoy, who not surprisingly only arrived in Palembang two to three months after the release of the edict. This means that it was only in late 1377 or early 1378 that the envoy arrived, and Maharaja Bhuri had by then already occupied the throne. Who was this king? Professor Syed Naquib has identified him as Maharaja Puri. He reads the name “Ma-na-zhe Wu-li” in the *Ming Shi-lu* as

“Maharaja Puri”³³ (Naquib al-Attas, 2011: 63 & 65). But I think the name is Maharaja Bhuri, meaning the “great Maharaja”. The word “*Bhuri*” in Sanskrit means “mighty”, “great”, “strong”, “important”, “abundant” (Monier-Williams 1999: 764). This corresponds with the meaning of the name “Parameswara”, which is “king”, “supreme lord”, “relating to or coming from the supreme god (Siva)” (Monier-Williams 1999: 620). The possibility of Parameswara having ascended the throne in 1377 or 1378 makes sense.

However, according to the *Ming Shi-lu* dated 18 September 1397, the Hongwu Emperor complained that San-fo-chi had failed to send tribute to China. Beijing also accused San-fo-chi of creating discord and deceiving the Chinese envoys into going to Palembang. This friction drew the attention of Java (Majapahit), which admonished San-fo-chi and forced it to escort the envoys back to China. This implies that Majapahit had again invaded San fo-chi. The Chinese record also mentioned that San-fo-chi was subject to Java even earlier. In around 1376, it was reported that San-fo-chi was conquered by Java (Groeneveldt 1960 [1880]: 69). Based on Tomé Pires’ information, the reason for the attack on Srivijaya was Parameswara’s action to dissociate himself from Majapahit’s overlordship, and to regard himself as an independent monarch. Pires said: “He had changed his name to Mijçura”, which according to Pires means “to exempt” (Cotesão 1967: 231).³⁴

Because of the invasion in 1391–92 (Wolters 1970: 147), Parameswara, who had ruled his realm for about 14 years, was compelled to seek asylum in Tumasik. But while sojourning on the island, he was alleged to have been involved in the murder of Sang Aji Singapura, who happened to be the son-in-law of the King of Siam (Cortesao 1967: 231–232). Parameswara was said to have usurped power and ruled six years before he was attacked by the Siamese just before early 1398 (Wolters, 1970: 147). Fleeing Siamese vengeance, Parameswara was forced to leave for Muar and later Bertam, in Melaka.

It seems that the local historians who proposed 1262 as the date for the founding of Melaka did not do their research thoroughly. Neither did they read the Malay sources that they used viz. the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* diligently and critically. Information regarding the reign of the first three rulers of Melaka, retrieved from any version of the *Sejarah Melayu*, has been proven to be incorrect by Professor Wang Gungwu.³⁵ Wang had unambiguously shown that the first three rulers of Melaka were Parameswara (r. 1403–13/14), Megat Iskandar Syah (r. 1413/14–24) and Sri Maharaja (r. 1424–44). Sri Maharaja must have still been on the throne of the Melaka sultanate even towards the end of 1444, for on 23 December of that year, the *Ming Shi-lu* reported that Melaka’s envoy by the name of Song-na-di-la-ye (*Sunan diraja?*) and others who were sent by the ruler had come to the Ming Court to offer tribute of horses and local products. But not long after that, on 28 March 1445, the Chinese records also mentioned that Melaka had again sent an envoy by the name of Mo-Zhe-na who came in order to bring a memorial and to offer tribute of horses and local products. Could this be a sign that there was a change of ruler in Melaka, and that the ruler was Ibrahim, mentioned by the *Sejarah Melayu* as having a short reign of 17 months? His very short reign was probably the reason why the *Ming Shi-lu* did not mention his name. Nevertheless, based on the *Sejarah Melayu*, Raja Ibrahim, nicknamed Sultan Abu Syahid (in Arabic, it means “father of the witness” or “father of the martyr”) was the fourth ruler of Melaka.

Meanwhile, the envoy Mo-zhe-na had probably planned to leave China by late April, because the *Ming Shi-lu* of 20 April recorded that his request for silk gauze headwear and ornamental gold and silver belts was approved by the Court. However, it seemed that by early May, Mo-zhe-na was still in China, for on 5 May 1445 it was again reported that Mo-zhe-na had requested “an imperial letter of protection for the country as well as ‘mang’ dragon robes and a parasol” be conferred on King Xi-li Ba-mi-xi-wa-er Diu-ba-sha (Sri Parameswara Dewa Syah)”, thus implying that another ruler had emerged in Melaka.³⁶ Mo-zhe-na and his other colleagues also said that the king of Melaka wished to personally come to the Chinese Court because he wanted to bring many people and a great amount of goods. For that they requested a large ship be conferred upon the Melaka delegation to facilitate the journey to and fro, which the emperor agreed to build. However, no mention of the Melakan ruler’s name is available in any version of the *Sejarah Melayu*.

Following the report in 1445 on Sri Parameswara Dewa Syah, it was only about ten years later (30 May 1455) that the *Ming Shi-lu* reported on Melaka again. In that report, Sultan Wu-da-fo-na Sha (Muzaffar Syah) was said to have sent envoys bringing tribute of horses and local products to the Ming Court. The report did not say that Muzaffar Syah was the new ruler of Melaka. Since there was no earlier report regarding Muzaffar Syah's ascension to the throne, one is left in the dark about Raja Kasim who, according to the *Sejarah Melayu*, succeeded Sultan Abu Syahid and became Sultan Muzaffar Syah. The narrative in the *Sejarah Melayu* only mentions Raja Ibrahim, who, having succeeded Sultan Muhammad Syah [sic], was murdered in a palace intrigue. Muzaffar Syah's name was only mentioned once by the *Ming Shi-lu* in 1455, not because he had just succeeded the throne but because he was sending tribute to the Emperor, implying that he was already on the throne much earlier under the name of Sri Parameswara Dewa Syah. Furthermore, bearing in mind that Raja Kasim had Indian blood on his mother's side, there was a strong likelihood that the title Sri Parameswara Dewa Syah referred to Raja Kasim.³⁷

It seemed that Sri Parameswara Dewa Syah or Raja Kasim later took the royal title, Sultan Muzaffar Syah, when he became more established as the Sultan of Melaka. It was during the first decade of his rule viz. between 1445 and 1555, that Melaka's relations with China were enhanced following his troubles with the Siamese. He was in actual fact the fifth ruler of Melaka. The *Sejarah Melayu* mentions that Muzaffar died after having ruled Melaka for 42 years. But since the Chinese records mentioned Parameswara Dewa Syah in 1445 and Sultan Wu-ta-fo-na-sha (Muzaffar Syah) in 1455, the period of his reign could be calculated from 1445 until the rise of Sultan Mansur Syah in 1458/1459. That would give his reign a duration of 13 or 14 years.

The sixth ruler of Melaka was Sultan Mansur Syah who, before taking over the throne, was known as Raja Abdul or Raja Abdullah. He ruled for 18 or 19 years (1458/59–77). His successor was Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah who, according to the *Sejarah Melayu*, was variously known as Raja Ahmad, Raja Husin and Raja Radin. Prior to taking the throne, Sultan 'Ala'uddin had two sons: Raja Munawir and Raja Zainal; but according to the *Sejarah Melayu* also, by his marriage with Tun Naja (daughter of Seri Nara Diraja Tun Ali), he fathered Raja Hitam, Raja Muhammad and Raja Fatimah. Raja Munawir was the eldest, followed by Raja Muhammad and then Raja Zainal.

In the opinion of this writer, however, the life background of 'Ala'uddin is very obscure. Although the *Sejarah Melayu* paints him as a great peacekeeping Sultan, having nocturnal confrontations with thieves in the suburbs of Melaka town, the report given by the *Rekidai hoan*³⁸ tells a more lacklustre story. 'Ala'uddin was only six years old when he sent a dispatch to the "King of the Country of Ryukyu" in 1480 (Kobata & Matsuda 1969: 116–118). The said letter was written by someone who signed off with the words "on behalf of the king"; but Kobata and Matsuda assumed that it was the *Laksamana* (Admiral) of Melaka who wrote on the Sultan's behalf. Perhaps Kobata got this impression based on the second letter from Melaka, dated 11 April 1480 which clearly stated that it was written and signed by the "Lo-tso-ma-na" of Melaka (ibid.: 119–120). However, one may question the validity of the statement in the first 1480 letter. If 'Ala'uddin was really only six years old in 1480, then he must have ascended the throne as the seventh Sultan of Melaka when he was only three, following his father's death in 1477.

This writer suspects that there might have been a mistake in the translation or transliteration of the original Jawi letter into Chinese. Instead of writing "*enam belas*" (sixteen) the translator might have read and transcribed it as "*enam*" (six) which makes it rather ridiculous to think that 'Ala'uddin became Sultan after his father's death at the puerile age of three. However, even if one were to assume that the information in document no. 9, volume XXXIX of the *Rekidai hoan* is correct, 'Ala'uddin was a father of several children when he was only seven in 1481. Therefore, it would be more logical to consider that 'Ala'uddin was already sixteen years old in 1480. That he was no longer a Sultan in late 1481 is evidenced by the *Ming Shi-lu*'s report on 23 August 1481, mentioning the emperor "having sent his envoys Lin Rong and his deputy, Huan Qiang-heng, with the mission to proceed and enfeoff Ma-ha-mu Sha, the son of Sudan Man-su Sha" as Sultan. The said envoys, however, did not reach Melaka, for their ship had sunk. On 24 June 1484, the *Ming Shi-lu* again reported that Zang Sheng was sent to Melaka as chief envoy, together

with Zuo Fu as his deputy, with the same purpose. The Chinese records imply that Sultan 'Ala'uddin only ruled Melaka for four years and not thirty-three years, as claimed by the copyist of the Raffles 18.

The eighth ruler was Sultan Mahmud Syah who, before ascending the throne, was named Muhammad, or shortened to Mamad. But he vacated his throne to make way for Ahmad Syah shortly before the Portuguese landed in 1511. In all the complete versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, Mahmud Syah was Sultan of Melaka until early 1511 or late 1510. He abdicated just before Afonso Dalboquerque invaded the sultanate. According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, it was Sultan Ahmad Syah who literally led the battle against the Portuguese. The author described the fight between the Melaka Malays and the Portuguese led by Dalboquerque in great detail, even though the Portuguese sources never mentioned Sultan Ahmad's name. But it appeared that Sultan Ahmad did succeed his father as Sultan of Melaka, as was proven when archaeologists discovered two tin coins bearing the inscription "Sultan Ahmad ibn Mahmud Syah".

To sum up, most versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* have listed a total of nine rulers who sat on the throne of the Melaka sultanate; but there are also other versions that listed ten rulers of Melaka. The list of nine rulers are:

1. Iskandar Syah
2. Raja Kecil Besar (Sultan Megat)
3. Raja Tengah (lit. "the middle prince", alias Sultan Muhammad Syah)
4. Raja Ibrahim (r. 17 months)
5. Raja Kasim (Sultan Muzaffar Syah)
6. Sultan Abdul or Raja Abdullah (Sultan Mansur Syah)
7. Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah
8. Sultan Mahmud Syah, and
9. Sultan Ahmad Syah.

On the other hand, the Krusenstern MS and several other versions supposedly written by Tun Seri Lanang give a list of ten rulers:

1. Iskandar Syah
2. Raja Besar Muda (lit. "junior chief prince")
3. Raja Tengah
4. Raja Kecil Besar (lit. "elder junior prince", alias Sultan Muhammad Syah)
5. Raja Ibrahim (Sultan Abu Syahid, who only ruled for one year and five months)
6. Raja Kasim (Sultan Muzaffar Syah)
7. Raja Abdullah (Sultan Mansur Syah)
8. Raja Husin (Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah)
9. Raja Mamat or Mamad (Sultan Mahmud Syah), and
10. Sultan Ahmad Syah (r. starting in late 1510 or early 1511)

However, the names and lengths of reign of the Melaka rulers, as elicited from the Chinese sources, are:

1. Ba-li-mi-su-la [Parameswara] (r. 1403–13/14): 10/11 years.
2. Mu-gan Sa-yu-di-er Sha [Megat Iskandar Syah] (r. 1414–23/24): 9/10 years
3. Xi-li-Maha la-zhe [Sri Maharaja] (r. 1424–44/45): 20/21 years
4. Xi-li Ba-mi-xi-wa-er Diu-ba-sha [Seri Parameswara Dewa Syah / alias Raja Kasim, later Wo-da-fo-na Sha (Muzaffar Syah) (r. 1444/45–58/59): 14/15 years

5. Su-dan-Mang-su Sha [Sultan Mansur Syah] (r. 1458/59–77): 18/19 years, and

6. Ma-ha-mu Sha [Sultan Mahmud Syah] (r. 1481–11): 30 years

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- ¹ According to a survey by Raimy Che-Ross, there are altogether 44 manuscripts (both complete and incomplete) of the *Sejarah Melayu* in various libraries in Europe, New Zealand as well as in Malaysia and Indonesia. See Raimy Che-Ross, “Malay Manuscripts in New Zealand”, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (2002 [75], 2: 30).
- ² This version of the *Sulalat uʿs-Salatīn* has been intensely studied and edited or translated by scholars since the early nineteenth century. They include Sir Richard Winstedt (1934), C. C. Brown (1952), Muhammad Haji Salleh (1997) and Abdul Rahman Ismail (2009).
- ³ “*Pasar*” in Old Javanese can also mean “cemetery.”
- ⁴ R. Roolvink, ‘The Variant Versions of the Malay Annals’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 123 (1967), no. 309
- ⁵ This copy has only 16 chapters ending with the story of Sultan Mansur Syah moving to another palace after the killing of Hang Kesturi.
- ⁶ *Ludang* is a Kawi word meaning to “finish”, “complete” or “to put an end to” (Zoetmulder 2000 [1]: 610).
- ⁷ See R. O. Winstedt, “The Date, Author and Identity of the Original Draft of the Malay Annals” in *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1938 [16], 3: 27).
- ⁸ The version read by François Valentyn, minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ambon in the late seventeenth century could, however, be an earlier copy, though not necessarily an original copy or version.
- ⁹ This writer is very grateful to Dr Geoffrey Wade for having taken the arduous task of translating and editing the documents called *Ming Shi-lu* which undoubtedly have benefitted countless scholars and researchers of the history of Southeast Asia. The Chinese sources on the early history of Melaka in this paper have been mainly taken from Geoffrey Wade, (ed.) (2005), *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu: An Open Access Resource* (www.epress.nus.edu.sg).
- ¹⁰ Nevertheless, in several versions of the *Sulalat uʿs-Salatīn* that contain the name Tun Seri Lanang, the name Sultan Mughayat Syah is used despite this being a misreading of the Jawi spelling for “Maʿiyat Syah”. The word “*maʿiyat*” in Persian means “co-existence”, “favour”, “affection”; whereas “*mughayat*” does not have any meaning (Steingass 2012: 1277).
- ¹¹ Timothy J. Moy, “The *Sejarah Melayu* Tradition of Power and Political Order: A Study in Political Legitimation”, M.A. Thesis, History Department, University of Malaya, 1976/77: 20.
- ¹² Rightly called by the Malay name “*kesusasteraan Sejarah*” by Teuku Iskandar, the *Sejarah Melayu* has a role to play in its function as a work of literature viz. to remind the Malay rulers of their principal duty of maintaining justice and fair play during their reigns.
- ¹³ See *Sulalat uʿs-Salatīn* (transliterated and edited with an introduction by Ahmat Adam), Yayasan Karyawan, Kuala Lumpur, 1966.
- ¹⁴ Incidentally, a Buddha statue was found in Bukit Siguntang, and in the opinion of F. M. Schnitger it probably dates back to the sixth century CE. Nik Hassan, a Malaysian archaeologist, however, estimates that it might have been sculpted between the late seventh century and early eighth century instead. See Nik Hassan Shuhaimi, “The Bukit Seguntang Buddha: A Reconsideration of Its Date”, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1979 (52) 2: 38–39).
- ¹⁵ “*Vicitra*” (from the Sanskrit “*Vichitra*”) means “variegated”, “many-coloured”, “brilliant”, “charming”, “beautiful” (Monier-Williams 1999: 959). It carries the same meaning as “*Supraba*”.
- ¹⁶ “*Parameswara*” (of Sanskrit origin) means “Supreme Lord” (Maharaja) or “Mahadewa” (especially referring to the name of Siwa). Zoetmulder (2000 (2): 768–769). It is also the name of Visnu or Siva or Indra, Supreme Being or God; or any eminent prince. See Monier-Williams (1999: 588).
- ¹⁷ “*Malaka*” in Sanskrit denotes an “arbour” (i. e. a shady garden alcove with the sides and roof formed by trees or climbing plants trained over a framework), “bower” or “patio”. It is also the name of various plants. However, it can also mean “a wood near a village” (Monier-Williams 1999: 813). There is no Sanskrit word that uses “*Melaka*” as the name of a tree.
- ¹⁸ According to the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia’s website, the tree is also known as the Indian gooseberry tree. Its scientific name is *Phyllanthus emblica*. However, the word “*malaka*” or “*malakka*” in Sanskrit does not indicate that it refers to a tree. See the preceding footnote.
- ¹⁹ Zheng He first arrived in Melaka on his third expedition in 1410 at a place called “Five Islands”, bringing with him the Ming Emperor’s imperial edicts with a mission to bestow upon the chief of that place two silver seals, a girdle and a robe. Following his visit, the town was raised to the status of “*ch’eng*”, meaning “city”. The place then became the country of Man-la-chia (Melaka). The chief, after having received the favour of being made king, then decided to visit the Emperor in 1411, bringing along his wife and son, in order to give his thanks and to present tribute of local products (J.V.G. Mills 1970: 108). According to the *Ming Shih-lu*, however, in 1405 the emperor appointed the chief as king.
- ²⁰ On 20 September 1413, the *Ming Shi-lu* reported that Parameswara had sent his nephew to head the delegation to Beijing to offer tribute of local products, which means that he was still alive.
- ²¹ Until today, historians studying the history of early Melaka relied so much on Tome Pires’ account of Parameswara’s life. Pires acquired his source of information from the Javanese. According to Pires, following Parameswara’s death, his son Xaquem Darxa (Megat Iskandar Syah) succeeded him and became a Muslim at the age of seventy-two after the ruler of Pasai agreed to send merchants to trade in Melaka. Pires’ account says that Megat Iskandar Syah married the daughter of the king of Pasai at that same age (Cortesaõ 1967: 241–242). He also said when Xaquem Darxa expressed his desire to go to China, he was already forty-five years old. Pires must have mixed up the name of Megat Iskandar Syah with the name of his father Iskandar Syah (Parameswara). According to the *Ming Shi-lu*, Megat Iskandar Syah came to the Ming Court in 1414 and was succeeded by Sri Maharaja in 1424. Therefore, he could not have been more than fifty-five years of age when he died. Therefore, the seventy-two-year-old Raja must have been Parameswara instead. Pires’ account is not reliable as his information is not

backed by any contemporary source.

- ²² Tan Ta Sen believes that Megat Iskandar Syah became a Muslim after having married the princess of Pasai in 1413, which unfortunately is not backed by any other evidence except for Pires. His other argument that the name Megat Iskandar Syah indicates that he had converted to Islam is not necessarily correct.
- ²³ The *syahadah* is called the Islamic creed; it is the soul, the core and foundation of all percepts of Islam. Commonly called the *syahadatain*, it consists of two sentences in Arabic which, when translated, means: "I testify that there is no God but Allah; and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God".
- ²⁴ However, al-Attas (2011: 61) is wrong when he claims that "Muhammad" was a personal name, because it was only an appellation.
- ²⁵ O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970: *passim*.
- ²⁶ "Tramberi" is a combination of the two Kawi syllables: "tram" and "brih". While "tram" is a mystical syllable, "brih" is called the sacred syllable. "Tramberi" refers to the Hindu sacred title of Sri Tri Buana (Zoetmulder 2000: [2]: 1271 and 1274; and [1]: 135).
- ²⁷ The author's piety is expressed in the doxology found in several versions of the *Sulalat u's-Salat* where he reiterated the message that one should only discuss the magnificence of God. Further, he also said, "Do not even think of the Essence of Allah" (Ahmat Adam 2016: 7).
- ²⁸ All other versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* mention that he ruled for 42 years.
- ²⁹ See D. F. A. Harvey, "Valenty's Description of Malacca", *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* no. 13 (June 1884: 67).
- ³⁰ See C. O. Blagden, "Notes on Malay History", *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* no. 53, September 1909: 139.
- ³¹ The Sanskrit word "*dharma*" means "virtue", "morality", "good works"; whereas "*sraya*" in Sanskrit means approaching for "protection", "refuge", "shelter"; "possessing anything, furnished or provided with, reliance or abode for shelter" (Monier-Williams 1900: 510 and 1096).
- ³² See Geoff Wade (trans.) 2005 entry 1887, 13 Sept. 1377.
- ³³ Naquib al-Attas wrongly transliterates the name as "Puri". "*Puri*" in Kawi means "palace"; the king's residence (Zoetmulder 2000: 884); whereas "*Buri*", besides meaning "powerful" or "great", can also mean the name of Brahma, Vishnu, or Siva. Monier-Williams (1999: 764).
- ³⁴ This is only an assumption by Pires. The word could not be "Mijçura" as there is no such word in Sanskrit or Malay. "Mahesvara", however means "great lord", "sovereign", or "chief" in Sanskrit. (Monier-Williams 1999: 802).
- ³⁵ See Wang Gungwu, "The First Three Rulers of Melaka", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 41, no. 1 (July 1968: 11–22).
- ³⁶ It was quite possible that before he left China, a messenger was sent from Melaka to inform Mo-zhe-na about the latest development, *viz.* regarding the succession to the throne by Sri Parameswara Dewa Syah.
- ³⁷ Raja Kasim's mother was Tun Ute, daughter of the Indian-born Mani Purindan with his Melaka wife, Tun Ratna Sundari, daughter of Tun Sri Nara Adiraja. See Ahmat Adam (2016: 113).
- ³⁸ Translated as "Precious Documents of Successive Generations" the *Rekidai hoan* was entirely written in Chinese, but has been translated into English by two Japanese scholars, Professors Atsushi Kobata and Mitsugu Matsuda.

The “Krusenstern Manuscript” of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*

Introduction

Most of us are quite familiar with the version of this manuscript (erroneously called the *Malay Annals* in English) often referred to as the Raffles 18. The *Sejarah Melayu* was first translated into English by John Leyden in 1810 but only published in 1821 by Stamford Raffles, long after Leyden’s death. C.C. Brown (1952) also translated the Raffles 18 based on Winstedt’s transliteration (1938); both were published by the Malayan (now Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (MBRAS). In 1995, the MBRAS again published the transliteration of the Raffles 18 – this time by Abdul Rahman Ismail.

Unknown to many scholars and students of the *Malay Annals* outside Russia, there is another manuscript currently kept in the Oriental archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences at Saint Petersburg. The MS (comprising of 30 narratives) had however been studied and published in the Russian language by Dr E. V. Revunenkova in 2008. The title of her work in English is “*Sulalatus-Salatin: Krusenstern’s Malay Manuscript, its Cultural and Historical Value*”. In 2016, a facsimile of the Krusenstern MS was published by Yayasan Karyawan with my transliteration. It took me five years to produce the latest critical recension of the manuscript, together with annotations. In the published work I have also provided an Introduction as a background to the study.

The Krusenstern MS contains two parts. The first part consists of 116 folios and the second has 86. The manuscript was written on Amsterdam-made paper watermarked “1794”. The size of each folio is 26.5 cm x 20 cm. The text’s measurement is 19 x 13.5 cm. But the sizes of the last two folios of the first part of the text are 10 x 9 cm each. The last two folios of the second part of the text measure 13 x 8 cm each. Like all Malay manuscripts, no title page is given. But unlike most other Malay manuscripts, the names of the copyists are given at the beginning of Narrative 13: Haji Muhammad Tahir al-Jawi (whose name indicates that he was Javanese), Muhammad Zakat Long and Ibrahim Jamrut (from the Persian “*zumurrud*” meaning “emerald”) (Steingass 2012: 621). While some parts of the manuscript are written in beautiful *Nasta’liq* script, there are also parts which are difficult to read.

Who was Krusenstern?

The man who was the original owner of the manuscript was a Russian naval officer of German descent named Adam Johann Ritter von Krusenstern. Sometime in the middle of 1798, he left Penang for Melaka. This was just three years after the Dutch-controlled port town was ceded to the British East India Company. Krusenstern’s purpose of going to Melaka was to recuperate from an illness. During his short stay, he came to know of the existence of the famous Malay literary work, the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*. Being curious, while also having an interest in the matter, he engaged three men, one most likely Javanese, to transliterate a copy of the said work that same year. For their work, they were paid a sum of 36 doits (31 ½ cent-guilders) for each day (8 doits was equal to 10 cents).

Upon his return to Russia, von Krusenstern gave the manuscript as a gift to his friend, Schubert, of the Science Academy at Saint Petersburg, who in turn gave it to the library of the Asiatic Museum of the academy in 1802. However, the existence of the MS was not recorded until 1819, when it was listed in the museum’s collection by someone named Fren. In spite of that, the manuscript remained a mystery for over two centuries, until 2008 when a study of this particular “*Malay Annals*” was done by Dr Revunenkova, who had it published in Russian in Saint Petersburg.

The study which I have undertaken is based on the Jawi facsimile found in Dr Revunenkova’s book.

Through the assistance of the Russian scholar, Dr Victor Pogadaev, I understood the gist of Dr Revunenkova's writings.

Unlike the popular Raffles 18, which was copied in 1812, the copyists of the Krusenstern MS had studiously copied the Jawi text in such a way that even though many of the words found in the Raffles 18 had been unintelligible to many scholars and researchers for so long, I was lucky to be able to decipher many of them, despite the conspicuous absence of Arabic vowels. However, my decision to approach the study through using the philological method paid off, as seen below.

The presence of Kawi words

By undertaking the philological approach and by comparing the text of the Krusenstern MS with the Raffles 18, I was able to decipher the Kawi and Sanskrit words. In previous studies of the *Malay Annals*, the presence of a large vocabulary of Old Javanese and Sanskrit words has never been recognised by almost all scholars, and this was essentially the main weakness of their work.

The presence of Kawi in the *Malay Annals* is not to be taken lightly. It was the language of the pre-Majapahit era, used in the *kakawin* (poetry) of the Ramayana and Arjunawiwaha (eleventh century CE). It is worth remembering that the existence of written Old Javanese has been proven by the Sukabumi inscription of 804 CE.

Although the spoken language of the Majapahit era (from 1293 CE) was Middle Javanese, Kawi continued to be used as language of literature, and this also had an influence on Malay literature as shown in early works, namely the *Hikayat Seri Rama*, *Sulalat u's-Salatin* and the *Hikayat Hang Tuha*.

The influence of Javanese on Malay

New Javanese emerged following the collapse of the Majapahit kingdom in 1527. But since the fourteenth century, the influence of the Javanese language on the Malay language has been quite extensive; unfortunately, little recognition has been given to it. Even the Terengganu inscription (dated 1308 CE) has numerous words of Javanese and Sanskrit origins, thus reflecting this influence. As a matter of fact, Sanskrit words most likely became a large influence on Malay through the spread of Kawi.

In my study of the Krusenstern MS, I found that apart from Kawi, quite a number of other foreign words, especially Persian, Arabic and Sundanese and of course Sanskrit, could also be found in the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*. Such foreign words could complicate translations. From the time of John Leyden (1810) until recently, all transcribers of Narrative 1, which discussed the marriage of Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn with the Indian princess, had read the name of the princess's father as "Kida Hindi" instead of "Kaid Hindi", the Persian word meaning "ruler" or "governor".

Examples of foreign words

The following words have been found in the Krusenstern MS: *ahmak* (Arabic for "dull-witted" or "of little understanding"); *alay*, (Arabic for "until") *ambeu* (Sundanese for "surprise"), *derji* (Persian for "tailor"), *fadihat* (Arabic for "fault"), *faniya* (Arabic for "to pass away"), *jawon* (Persian for "youth"), *jogan* (Persian for "royal ensign"), *kala* (Persian for "silk cloth"), *khuluk* (Arabic for "firm character"), *Měurah* (Acehnese for "title of nobility"), *nafiri* (Persian for "trumpet"), *zihin* (Arabic for "mind"), *wa'ad* (Arabic for "contract"), *utus* or *utoih* (Acehnese for "craftsman"), *tuhfat* (Arabic for "gift"), *Bra Cau* (a Siamese title), *Po* (Champa for "chieftain"), *sarhad* (Persian for "frontier"), and *jereun* (Acehnese for "shrub").

Jawi script without vowels

Since the early nineteenth century, due to the absence of Arabic vowels in the Malay Jawi script, many

words have been misread and therefore wrongly transliterated by previous scholars. For example, words like *Suprab(h)a*, *benua Kalinga*, *Bhuta* or *Bota* (demon), *Oya Deco* (Siamese noble) and *Bo Banyu* (Siamese king) have been wrongly read as “Sapurba”, “benua Keling”, “Bat, “Awi Dicu” and “Bubunnya” respectively.

Due to the misreading of Sanskrit and Kawi words, the meanings of names of such characters as Bicitram, Suprab(h)a, Nila Pahlawan, Krishna Pandayan, Wan Malini, Wan Empu, and Wan Sundari have become distorted, and their significance has never been well-explained. While “Suprabha” renders the meaning “glorious light”, it is also another name for the Buddha. *Malini* (lit. the garland maker) was in fact a disciple of the Buddha.

Wan Sundari (meaning “the beautiful woman”) is also another of the Buddha’s disciples, while in the *Malay Annals* she is said to be the daughter of Demang Lebar Daun. In comparison, Wan Empu represents the honourable indigenous lady who was symbolically converted to Buddhism when she married Suprab(h)a.

As for the word “Wan” (from Kawi *Hwan*), it means “one who is a peasant”. It does not refer to the title for someone who is a descendant of high rank. Heretofore, in previous studies of the *Malay Annals*, the word “Suprab(h)a” had been transliterated and read as “Sapurba” or “Sepurba”, and “*adiraja*” transliterated and read as “*aldiraja*” both of which do not carry any meaning. The Muslim author of the *Malay Annals* avoided saying that the Malays became Buddhists and Hindus. And so “Suprabha”, “Karna Pandayan” (the wise Krishna) and “Nila Pahlawan” (also representing Vishnu) are instead mentioned merely as individuals (see Chapter Two).

In my study, I have argued that the *Sejarah Melayu* was written in stages – possibly from an oral source. It was first written during the reign of Sri Maharaja (r. 1423/4–44/5) and during the rule of Muzaffar Syah (r. 1444/5–58/9), Mansur Syah (r. 1458/9–77) and until the period of the first ‘Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Syah of Johor (r. 1528–64). It was probably also during this period that the Persian *Nasta’liq* script was first used and syncretic sufism (divination and astrology) found its way in the *Annals*.

The subtitle of the book, “*yakni pertuturan [sic, pituturan] segala raja-raja*” (i.e. memory, recollection and reminder to all rulers), clearly expressed the noble purpose of the author to counsel future Malay rulers by reminding them of their responsibilities as Rajas and the calamities that would befall them if the bipartisan contract between Demang Lebar Daun and Sang Supraba was ignored. For centuries, the Kawi word “*pituturan*” has been misread as either “*pertuturan*” or “*peraturan*” both by the Orientalists as well as local (Malay and Indian Muslim) transliterators, but its true meaning can be discerned from the narratives that run through the text. The narratives are intended as a recollection or a reminder for the Malay Rajas.

By narrating the duel by keris between *Laksamana* Hang Tuha and Hang Kesturi, the author shows his primary intention to remind his readers of the importance of the doctrinal curse (*sumpahan*) that was inscribed on the Kota Kapur (686 CE) inscription and the Sibokingking inscription at Telaga Batu (in the seventh century CE) regarding the consequences of disloyalty to authority (*drohaka*), in particular the act of treason against the king.

My recension attempts to show where the previous transcribers have erred in their transliteration from Jawi to Rumi. The Kawi word “*kunjak/gonjak*” (meaning “to jest”) for example, has been misread by all transcribers. Abdul Rahman Ismail read and transliterated it as “*goncang*” (to shake); Winstedt read it as “*berguncang*” (excitation); Shellabear read it: “*perkejut*” (to stiffen with fear, terrify) and Muhammad Haji Salleh: read it as “*kencanglah*” (to be strong or tensed).

Errors in transliterations were probably started by transliterators such as Leyden (1807–1810), Braddel (1851), Shellabear (1896) and Winstedt (1935). Some local Indian Muslims transliterators who were employed by the Europeans also contributed towards the misreadings. Later editors such as Situmorang and Teeuw (1952), Abdul Samad Ahmad (1979), A. Rahman Ismail (1998) and Muhammad Haji Salleh (1997) also did not venture to rectify the mistakes.

For ages, readers reading the Rumi texts of the *Sejarah Melayu* have been told that the reading of the

Jawi spelling [لکیو] (l/k/y/w) (the name of one of Hang Tuha's companions) is "Lekiyu". I say it should be read as "Lukewa" (from Old Javanese "lukai" or "luke" to mean a particular kind of chopping knife or a sickle). Likewise, /t/w/h/ [توه] is not "Tuah" but "Tuha". "Hang Tuha" literally means the "accomplished" leader, since *Tuha* means "leader" as well as "old". It is worth noting that the word "tuah" (luck or fortune) did not exist before the 1630s when the "*Hikayat Aceh*" was composed. Neither did the word "tua" (old).

Misreading of "Tuah" instead of "Tuha"

All "names" of major chiefs in the *Malay Annals* are actually titles or merely nicknames. This is because of name taboos which prohibit the naming of the chiefs; we return again to the *Laksamana*, since "Hang Tuha" was never his real name. Since the word "Tuah" did not exist before the 1630s, the Jawi spelling /t/w/h cannot be "Tuah". It is a misread word, perhaps started by Europeans after Valentyn translated "Hang Toeha" to "Hang Toea". For Europeans, the word "tua" (old, ancient, or deep in colour) would be much easier to pronounce if the spelling of the word ended with the consonant /h/ as in /t/o/o/a/h/.

Mistakes in pronunciation and reading could also be seen in the reading of the name "Raja Cangka Anak" (a Champa title). It has been wrongly read as "Raja Jakanak" (Winstedt), "Jaknaka" (Shellabear), and "Jaka Anak" (A. Rahman Ismail). The Kawi word "*cangka*" means "self confident" or "bold". Similarly, the name "Raden Purna Lango" has been transliterated as "Radin Perlangu" (Winstedt, A. Rahman Ismail), and also read as "Kirana Langu" (Shellabear). "*Lango*" means "being entranced by love" in Kawi, whereas "*Langu*" means "having a sickening smell", or "revolting". Clearly the word should be "*Lango*".

Due to several interpolations made by copyists and editors, almost every copyist, not excluding the ones who worked on the Raffles 18, and also all manuscripts attributed to "Tun Seri Lanang", have read and transliterated the Kawi word "*pertuturan*" [*sic*, *pituturan*] ("reflection", "memory") as either "*peraturan*" ("regulations") or "*peturunan*" ("descent") or "*perturan*" (an unrecognisable word). Muhammad Haji Salleh has even read it as "*pěrtěturan*" instead of "*pertuturan*". The confusion comes from the fact that the use of vowels in writing certain words in the Jawi script is not always necessary.

In the Krusenstern MS, the narratives of the mythical marriages of Sultan Mansur Syah to Raden Ayu Candra Kirana and Princess Hang Li Po are found in Narratives 11 and 12 respectively. The purpose of the myths are primarily to demonstrate the grandeur of Malaka and its ruler, Sultan Mansur Syah (r. 1458/9-77). The royal visit to Majapahit (Narrative 11) is also intended as an illustration of Melaka's greatness *vis-à-vis* Javanese Majapahit. As I have argued elsewhere, this visit never even took place.

Similarly, the narrative about Mansur Syah's fictional marriage to Hang Li Po is symbolic in order to show the greatness of the Melaka ruler *vis-à-vis* the Emperor of China. Needless to say, this marriage never took place. However, if one were to accept without question Tomé Pires' account of the marriage of a Melaka Raja to a Chinese damsel, such as the marriage of (Megat) Iskandar Syah (Parameswara's son) to the daughter of a Chinese captain who accompanied the Raja on his return to Melaka from China, one might assume that the narrative could have inspired the original author of the *Sejarah Melayu* to narrate the myth of Sultan Mansur Syah marrying a Chinese princess by the name of Hang Li Po. Likewise, the story about the Chinese emperor having to drink the water used to wash Mansur's feet in order to cure his skin disease is also an absolute myth. Neither did the marriage with Galuh Candra Kirana (a character taken from the *Panji Tales*) ever happen.


The *Malay Annals* was supposed to have been written or copied again on 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* (the third month) 1021 AH (which is equivalent to Sunday, 13 May 1612 CE). The Krusenstern MS was copied from the manuscript written by the Johor *Bendahara Paduka Raja*, who was exiled to Aceh after Batu Sawar was sacked by the Acehnese Sultan Iskandar Muda in mid-1613. The date, 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* (regardless of the *Hegira* year) has been adopted by every version of the *Sejarah Melayu* because it is the common belief among Muslims that this is also the birthdate of the Prophet Muhammad. The first Acehnese manuscript

replaced Sunday with Thursday, which was dated 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1022 AH (or 2 May 1613 CE). But it was recopied some time during the reign of Sultanah Tajul 'Alam (r. 1641–75), perhaps in the 1660s. The district system called *Sagoe* [*Sagi*] was introduced in Aceh during this period. The “*Datuk Sogoh*” (*sic*, *Sagoe*) mentioned in the *Sejarah Melayu* was the chief of one of “three sagis”.

The Acehnese copy of the Malay Annals

Bendahara Paduka Raja revised the Annals when Sultan Abdullah Mughayat [*sic*] Syah was installed by Iskandar Muda as ruler of Johor towards the end of 1613. The proof that the *Malay Annals* was recopied in Aceh is the presence of several Acehnese words in the Krusenstern MS. Examples of such words are: “*goga*” (“tumult; noise”); *Orang Kaya* (“the Chief of”) *Sogoh* [*sic*, “*Sagoe*”]; “*datuk si keudé*” (an Acehnese title; “*keude*” meaning “shop”); “*utus [utoih]*” (meaning “craftsmen”; “builders”); *panglima banda* (an Acehnese title); *silo* (“dazzled by glare”), “*pincok*” (“fruit salad”), and “*surung/srong*” (“to bribe”).

The authorship of the “Sejarah Melayu”

After the death of the *Bendahara Paduka Raja*, the *Sejarah Melayu* was again copied by an unknown person who inserted the name of “Tun Seri Lanang” and his family tree. “*Lanang*” means “man” in Kawi. Many past researchers claimed that his name was “Tun Mahmud” [] (“Mahmud” means the praised one) and nicknamed “Tun Seri Lanang” (the splendid gentleman), *Paduka Raja gelar* (titled) *Bendahara*. In another version of the *Annals* his name was said to be Muhammad (“praiseworthy”). In another, he was called Hamid (“meaning praising, or one who praises”).

Was Tun Seri Lanang the author of the Malay Annals?

In the writing tradition of maritime Southeast Asia (before the eighteenth century) no native author (or copyist) would ever mention his name in his work. This was due to the practice of observing the name taboo, which means that one’s personal name must never be revealed. For example, the author of the Javanese text *Nagarakrtagama* (written in 1365) only used his pseudonym, “*Prapanca*” (meaning “mistaken”; “confused mind”). “Tun Seri Lanang”, whose name was said to be Muhammad, Mahmud, or Hamid (all meaning “the praised one” or “the one who praises”) might also be a pseudonym. He was not the author, but one of many copyists who re-copied the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*. In fact, the 1798 manuscript that was copied in Melaka became the first Malay manuscript bearing the names of the copyists.

What is unique about the study of the Krusenstern MS?

For the first time, the copyists attempted to make a complete transliteration and translation in Malay of the “*Chiri*” or “*Ciri*” (an invocation used as testimony, evidence, mark or sign) that was recited by the demon (*raksasa*), Bhuta (or Bhota), on the occasion of the inauguration of “Bicitram Syah” as “Sang Suprab(h)a”. Apart from the *Ciri*, I have also transliterated the Javanese poem for singing called *kidung* (or *tembang*) and translated it into Malay. The clarification of certain terms in the poem and their significance has also been made for the first time. Below is my transliteration of the *Ciri*:

Ho there! Peace and tranquility be to His Majesty Sri Maharaja, whose fame pervades the seven realms of the land of gold, whose might is by the power of his hand. Being in possession of the crown adorned with the serpent, his fame in war reaches the three kingdoms in the nine realms. He is quick in action, he moves speedily with his steed into the forest of lofty trees, combatting and attacking with full valour. He sits in state on the lion throne in the fortress with arched gates.

During a certain season he would wander with a happy look, amusing himself at the lake island, taking

repose; with meritorious purpose – giving away gifts. O benevolent and righteous king, supreme ruler, **maharaja diraja**, he who is lord, the grand sovereign, like the rain that nurtures life, he makes firm of his powerful army; His Majesty Sri Maharaja, the king of kings.

I have also translated the Javanese *kidung* regarding Hang Tuha's image among women in Majapahit:

Come, this is the betel-leaf, please accept it as a way of appeasing this passionate feeling; though daily do I see you, yet this pang of love still misses you.

Anxiety looms from among all the dames when seeing the Laksamana, the Malay raja's soldier, strutting.

Frenzy sets in among all of the girls upon seeing the Laksamana, the Malay raja's cavalier striding.

How graceful is the beautiful daughter of the ironsmith, continually arousing passion in order that the heart grows fonder, by ever flavouring the betel-leaf with lime and other condiments.

Startled is the person on the lover's lap upon seeing the Laksamana marching, the hero from across the ocean.

So follow you the man, when confronted kill him instantly, kill the second, and the third, and all his attendants,

Panic grips the market people upon seeing the Laksamana coming afoot, the commander of the Malaka raja.

Forgetful is the listless lover, heartbroken in love, yet still able to keep the promise to comfort the broken heart that is constantly depressed in sadness.

Though the pain is already healed by the forgotten lover, there is still the yearning for love; even though I try to comfort my heart, it always longs for love.

Commotion breaks out at the audience hall upon the arrival of the Laksamana, cavalier of the raja of Malaka.

She wants to undo this hair of hers and wishes to cry for his company but the hair does not give happiness. Such is her cry for her hair: "Oh my, this hair of mine too is not happy".

Thus is the fortune of the Laksamana in Majapahit, always adored with passion of love by many. And so a song is thus composed:

A drop of dew on the tip of the garlic's leaf,

It trickles from the leaf of the cumin,

Throughout the day oh my, how I crave

To be drunk in love; how I yearn the joy of falling in love

Like having a bath in the open hall, the shame is indescribable,

Feeling shame, and unhappy, oh how cruel it is,

Forever crying, pining for his love.

Conclusion

The Krusenstern MS is possibly the oldest copy among all the manuscripts attributed to "Tun Seri Lanang". This particular manuscript has been kept in Russia for no less than 200 years. Its existence in the Archive of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts at Saint Petersburg was only made known to the outside world after the collapse of communism in Russia. The present recension will hopefully reveal new information about the true character of the *Malay Annals*, or more properly called the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*.

Portuguese words in the *Sejarah Melayu* and the development of Malay vocabulary

When Afonso Dalboquerque invaded Melaka in 1511, a new age of European entry into Asia began. With the city's capture, the Portuguese dream of controlling the spice route from Southeast Asia to the Persian Gulf via the Indian Ocean was now a reality. As soon as Portuguese control was established, Dalboquerque wasted no time in attempting to restore Melaka to its position as an important trading emporium. He did his best to lure the Peguan, Indian and Chinese merchants back by giving them friendly treatment. He even established relations with neighbouring states, among which were Siam, Java and not least Kampar.

Even though the native traders of Southeast Asia prevented the Portuguese from securing a monopoly over the rich spice trade, they were, nevertheless, able to secure a considerable share of the clove trade in the Moluccas and Ambon, nutmeg in Banda, as well as securing the sandalwood trade of Solor and Timor. They were able to do this by strictly following a policy of avoiding conflicts and concluding treaties with the native rulers of Eastern Indonesia.

As the first of the Europeans who established a colony in Southeast Asia, the Portuguese certainly had to acquaint themselves with the language and culture of the people that they had come in contact with. While it is true that during their 130-year rule of Melaka, relations between the Portuguese and Asians were mainly confined to trading transactions, the nature of trade in Southeast Asia meant that the Portuguese had to adopt the language of the port cities where the intra-Asian trade was conducted, in order to communicate with the merchants. Malay was the regional *lingua franca* before the arrival of the Portuguese, and as such it is the purpose of this chapter to examine the influence of Portuguese on the Malay language and vice versa during the sixteenth, or more realistically, the seventeenth century. The observations made are based on the Portuguese words used in the *Sejarah Melayu*, namely the Blagden manuscript, which forms the body of the Raffles 18, considered by many as the oldest of its kind (it was written or copied before 1536) and other popular versions which included the first translation into English by John Leyden in 1810 (subsequently published in 1821 with an introduction by Raffles), the version edited by Abdullah Munshi in 1840 or 1841, followed by the recensions by Shellabear (1896), Datuk Maradjo Indo (1959) and Abdul Samad Ahmad in 1986.

The Leyden translation, as well as the transliteration of the Raffles 18 by Muhammad Haji Salleh (1994) and by Abdul Rahman Ismail (1995) have also been used to determine which version of the *Sejarah Melayu* is the earliest. By comparing these variants, the present writer thus studied the extent of Portuguese words used by the different copyists.

When the first Portuguese arrived in Melaka on 11 September 1509 with a squadron of five vessels under the command of Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, they discovered that Melaka was very much interconnected with the port-cities of the Malay Archipelago. The main commercial centres were the Malay-speaking areas, which also included Pasai, Johor, Patani, Aceh and Brunei. The language was so commonly used that not only was Malay predominant in the archipelago, but it was also widely spoken in central and southern Philippines, and as far away as Paulo Condore, off the coast of southern Vietnam (Reid 1988:7).

The conquest of Melaka has been well recorded by Afonso Dalboquerque himself and his son. But the events of 1509 and 1511 are also recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu*, long known to the Malays by its original title, *Sulalat u's-Salatin yakni pituturan segala raja-raja*. To some it was called it the *Hikayat Melayu* (the *Malay Chronicles*). It was most probably written when Mahmud Syah, the last reigning Sultan of Melaka, was still alive. But the probability that it was written much earlier cannot be dismissed. The earlier parts could have even been written as early as the period of Muzaffar Syah (r. 1445–58/59), when

Melaka was already noted as a prosperous port city and envied by the Siamese. Over several generations, however, the *Sejarah Melayu* had undergone changes when copyists from one generation to another made interpolations, thus resulting in 44 complete and incomplete variants.

Until now, determining the authorship of the original manuscript and the date of its composition are still being debated by scholars of Malay history. There has been, nevertheless, consensus among some scholars to agree with Sir Richard Winstedt that the Raffles 18, which was discovered and discussed at length by him in 1938. This particular version contains 31 stories which have been categorised as chapters or narratives by the editors of the work. Eight of these, which formed the ending, have been published by C. O. Blagden (see Blagden 1925: 10–52). Winstedt is of the view that these eight narratives “contain that nucleus of the ordinary version” of the *Sejarah Melayu* (See Winstedt, “Preface”) that was copied in 1612.

In his attempt to determine the date of authorship of the *Sejarah Melayu*, Winstedt had observed that the Blagden manuscript had not recorded any event of historical importance beyond 1535. In its last narrative, the Blagden manuscript described the arrival of Raja Zainal, the Pahang prince, at Sayong, on the upper reaches of the Johor river, asking for recognition from Johor’s Sultan ‘Ala’uddin as Sultan. The attack launched by da Gama and 400 Portuguese soldiers in 1536 on the Johor river, where the Malays suffered heavy casualties, after which they were forced to seek peace with the Portuguese, was also not mentioned.¹ Winstedt argues that while most versions of the *Malay Annals* recorded events occurring after 1536, the author of the Blagden manuscript had also not ended his story with a peroration or colophon. Winstedt suspected that the manuscript could have been carried off by someone in the Portuguese squadron (see Winstedt 1938: 30). That the Blagden manuscript seemed to be the earliest version was also demonstrated not only by the sheer shortness of the manuscript, but also by the short list of the genealogy of the Melaka nobility which did not extend beyond the grandchildren of the *Bendahara*, Tun Ali Hati, whom Sultan Mahmud had executed in 1510. In the later versions of the post-1612 work, the copyist nevertheless tried to emphasise the close relationship that existed between the Sultans and the *Bendaharas*.

In his attempt to prove that the Blagden manuscript was the oldest version of the *Sejarah Melayu*, Winstedt indeed had several plausible arguments. W. Linehan had also supported Winstedt’s contention that the preface of the copy of the Raffles 18 in the holdings of the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society had differences from the Shellabear preface. While the Raffles 18 preface does not mention the death of Johor’s Sultan ‘Ala’uddin in Aceh, it is mentioned in the Shellabear recension. While most writers have come to a consensus that the Raffles 18 copy is one of, if not the earliest version, Abdul Samad Ahmad, who published one version of the *Sejarah Melayu* in 1979 (using the three versions kept in the library of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur), did not think so. He put forward the argument that the word “peraturan” in the sentence “*Maka fakir namainya hikayat ini Sulalat u’s-Salatina [sic], yakni peraturan segala raja-raja*” was misleading. Samad failed to comprehend that Winstedt’s reading of the Jawi spelling /p/t/w/t/w/r/n/ had in fact led to the mispronunciation of the word, thus derailing its true meaning. This particular orthographical error has nevertheless been corrected by Abdul Rahman Ismail, who correctly deciphered the Jawi spelling of the word. A. Samad Ahmad also disputed Winstedt’s contention that the “author” of the *Sejarah Melayu* in 1612 was Tun Bambang.

In order to verify the age of the original manuscript of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the present writer believes that another method is by looking at the extent of Portuguese words used in each particular recension of the *Malay Annals*. The present writer has also edited the Krusenstern MS, copied upon the instructions of Adam Krusenstern in mid-1798 (See Ahmat Adam 2016: Introduction, and the preceding chapter for more details).

Looking at the Blagden manuscript, it is pertinent to note that in the abovementioned eight narratives, the events of 1509 and 1511 have not been included. Instead, they tell the story of the last days of Sultan Mahmud Syah in Bentan, and how he and his subjects had to face the Portuguese attacks and the two attempts by the Malays to attack the Portuguese in Melaka. These encounters that the Malays had with the Portuguese after the conquest of Melaka are interesting because in no other versions of the *Malay Annals*

are the two attempts so vividly described. The chapters in the Blagden manuscript also seem to have been written based on the fresh memories of the author. The Portuguese words used in this version of the *Malay Annals* can be assumed to be loan words that had been absorbed into the Malay language by that time, and were certainly familiar to the author. The fact that the manuscript ended with a narrative about Raja Zainal arriving in Sayong is more evidence that the later copyists, especially the compiler of the Raffles 18, had tried to extend the narrative by including later events such as those found in the Shellabear version, the copies used by Abdullah Munsyi when he printed his edition in 1840/1841 and the copy that John Leyden used for his English translation.

In order to make a comparison on the use of Portuguese and other European loan words in the *Malay Annals*, we shall begin by looking at the Portuguese words used by the author of the Blagden manuscript. Although the Portuguese loan words used in said version could also be found in the later versions, there are, nonetheless, some other words which are glaringly absent in the Raffles 18. For example, the episode about the first Portuguese landing on Melaka (which, according to the Krusenstern MS, was followed by an attack led by Captain Gonsalo Pereira) is inserted into Narrative 32 of the Shellabear version (Narrative 28 in the Krusenstern MS), and it also narrates the invasion of Kota Mahligai by the Siamese prince, Chau Sri Bangsa, and how the Patani *negeri* (state) was created. This narrative was somehow omitted by the copyist or author of the Raffles 18. The missing story of the first Portuguese attack was nevertheless included in the episode about the invasion of Pahang by the Siamese Raja of Ligor in Narrative 21 of the Raffles 18. But interestingly enough, when narrating the first Portuguese visit to Melaka, the author of this particular variant did not mention Captain Gonsalo Pereira's name when narrating the first attack on Melaka.² Pereira is only named in the Krusenstern MS, the Shellabear and other versions proclaiming Tun Seri Lanang as the purported author. However, the word "*bizurai*" (*vizier*) instead of "*wazir*" is also used in the Raffles 18; the latter is not to be found in the Blagden manuscript. Although "*wazir*" appears to be closer to the original Portuguese word "*vizir*", the vowel [i] used in "*bizurai*" seems closer in proximity to "*vizir*". Therefore, the use of the loan word "*bizurai*" instead of "*wazir*" could perhaps be interpreted as an indication that this variant was written at an earlier date.

The Malay language had drawn considerable interest of Europeans from as early as 1521, when the Italian Antonio Pigafetta arrived in the Moluccas. He was so drawn to the fact that the people of that region were using the Malay language as it was spoken in Melaka. Untrained as he was in language and linguistics, Pigafetta had relied on a Malay speaker from Sumatra to provide him with the data for his compilation of Malay words, which ultimately became the first written Malay glossary. Sixty years later, van Linschoten, a Dutch sailor, who had visited Indonesia, reported that Malay was not only a well-known language, but was also the most courtly of the Oriental tongues, a knowledge of which was as indispensable in the Indies as that of French in Holland (Takdir Alisjahbana 1956: 8). Even St Francis Xavier wrote his comments on Christian doctrines in the Malay language when he visited the Moluccas in the sixteenth century.

Indeed, when the Sultan of Ternate was competing for Portuguese favour against the Sultan of Tidore, two letters in Malay were sent to the King of Portugal in 1521 and 1522, even though the style of the Malay language used was not smooth, and possibly written by a scribe or scribes not well acquainted with the language (Blagden 1930: 87–101). These letters, like the ones written by the Sultan of Aceh and addressed to Queen Elizabeth of England in 1602 and to King James in 1612 (W.G. Shellabear 1898: 107–120), are indicative of the importance of the Malay language for communication in the Malay world of Southeast Asia. However, it is interesting to note that in all the above letters, no Portuguese words were used. But in the Raja of Brunei's letter addressed to an English captain at Jambi, which was probably written in the early seventeenth century, the word "*Sinyor*" (from the Portuguese "*senhor*", meaning "feudal lord") was used when addressing the English captain.

It is difficult to determine when Portuguese words were absorbed by the Malay language. However, it may be possible to speculate that the Portuguese word "*tranqueira*" must have first been introduced by the

Portuguese when they wanted to translate the Malay word “*kubu*”, which today is the name of a place in Melaka. Incidentally, the area called Kubu is also adjacent to the present-day suburb of Tranquerah. Based on the Portuguese sources of Jão de Barros (see Pintado (1993: 153, 161), the Malays had set up palisades along the beach and a timber stockade near the Melaka bridge in 1511; meanwhile the Javanese had also built their defences in the suburbs of what was then known as Upeh, but now recognised as Tengkerah and Limbungan (meaning a dock for loading, unloading and repair of ships).

Based on the *Sejarah Melayu* (1612 or earlier) and the *Hikayat Hang Tuha*, which was written at a later date, one can speculate that Portuguese influence on the Malay language probably took effect by the beginning of the mid-sixteenth century. Using the more prominent versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, it would be possible to say that the earliest words used by the Malays were those connected with navigation, military wares, and title-ranks of soldiers or naval officers such as Kapitan (capitão, or “captain”) and Kapitan Mor. The word “*mor*” is the short and poetic form of “*maior*”, which means “major” in Portuguese (“Captain Major”). Judging from the Portuguese words in the Raffles 18 and other versions, it can be said that not many loan words were absorbed by the authors or copyists. Out of the thirty-one narratives found in the Raffles 18, only in Narratives 21 and 24 can one find Portuguese loan words. Surprisingly, although Narrative 23 describes the final attack which finally sees the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese, no Portuguese words are found, unlike in Narrative 21.

In both Shellabear’s and Abdullah Munsi’s editions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the Portuguese words are found in Narratives 32 and 34 which, like Narratives 21 and 24 of the Raffles 18, also provide a narrative of the Portuguese attack on Melaka. Like Narrative 24 of the Raffles 18, Narrative 32 of both editions describes the first attack by the Portuguese on Melaka and the final conquest of Melaka is described in Narrative 34 of Shellabear’s and Abdullah’s editions. The narrative ends with Raja Abdullah of Kampar, tricked by the Portuguese into boarding their ship only to be held captive and then sent to Goa later (this also appears in Munsi Abdullah’s version). It is in this chapter that some Portuguese words have also been used. Based on these chapters, it appears that the Portuguese loan words were only used by the authors or copyists of later years.

Listed below are words of Portuguese origin that have been absorbed into the Malay language and were most probably used by the author or copyists only in the context of discussing episodes which involved the Malays and the Portuguese. Strangely enough, these loan words are not found anywhere else. This glaring absence indicates that the chapters containing these words were probably written by someone who had witnessed the events of 1509, 1511 and the period after Melaka was occupied, when the Malays had to face the Portuguese forces in Johor, Kampar and Bentan.

Looking at some of the words used, it is interesting to note that besides Portuguese words, there were also two words of Dutch origin being used, namely the word “*senapang*” (from “*senaphan*” for “musket”). This is found in Narrative 34 of the Shellabear version, which described the captivity of the Raja of Kampar. Also interesting is the use of the word “*Castilan*” from Portuguese “*castilão*” in Narrative 25 of the Shellabear version. But the word is also Spanish. In the *Sejarah Melayu*, it is used when describing the circumstances that led to the Raja of Moluku making his escape to Melaka during the reign of Sultan ‘Ala’uddin. According to the writer, the Raja of Moluku was defeated by “*Kastilan*”, which most probably refers to the Spanish military force. However, this is strange since it was not possible for Spain to make its presence in the Malay Archipelago felt before the advent of the Portuguese in 1509. The use of this word probably shows that this particular narrative (which does not seem to exist in the Raffles 18) was copied during a later period, most probably the early seventeenth century when Spain was already present in the eastern part of the archipelago.³

In order to ascertain which version of the *Sejarah Melayu* was written before the 1612 copy, it would be worthwhile to compare the narratives about the description of the strength of the Portuguese naval forces, according to the different versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*. It is interesting to note that while the Raffles 18 enumerated the number of warships as:

Fongso Dhalberkarki pun naik ke Portugal mengadap Raja Portugal minta irmada [ايرمد],⁴ maka diberi oleh

Raja Portugal empat buah kapal dan lima buah ghali panjang. Maka ia turun berengkap pula di Guha tiga buah kapal, lapan ghalias, empat buah ghali panjang, lima belas fusta, maka jadi empat puluh semuanya ... Maka dipersembahkan oranglah kepada Sultan Ahmad "bahawa Feringgi datang menyerang, tujuh buah kapal dan lapan ghalias dan sepuluh buah ghali dan pencalang lima belas buah dan fusta lima buah ..." (Raffles 18: narrative 23, f.191).

(Afonso Dalboquerque then headed for Portugal to see the King of Portugal in order to request armadas which the King of Portugal then gave him, viz. four ships and five long galleys. He then came down to Goa fully armed with three ships, eight galleys, four long galleons, [and] 15 pinnaces making it 40 altogether ... and it was conveyed to Sultan Ahmad "that the Portuguese have come to attack [with] seven ships, eight galleons and 10 galleys as well as 15 look-out ships and five pinnaces ...")

From the above description, it is clear that when Afonso Dalboquerque departed for Melaka he had with him only 40 ships of different types.⁵ The report conveyed to Sultan Ahmad of Melaka, however, was that the Portuguese had arrived with seven ships, eight galleass (Portuguese: *galeaca*) and ten galleys (Portuguese: *galé*) and fifteen *pencalang*⁶ plus five pinnaces.⁷ Although the report suggests that there was an excess of five vessels, it could nonetheless be speculated that when Afonso Dalboquerque left Goa, he had with him forty vessels but this number was exaggerated by the later copyists of the *Sejarah Melayu*. Based on this assumption, it goes without saying that the Raffles 18 version was indeed copied from an early text, perhaps the earliest, that was the same main copy that the Krusenstern MS was based on. This is because a similar narrative about the warships that Dalboquerque received from the King of Portugal is found in the final narrative (Narrative 30) of the Krusenstern MS.

Besides mentioning the total number of 43 vessels which include *ghalias* for *ghalleys*, *armada*, *fusta* and *pencalang*, the last chapter that describes the attack by the Melaka people led by Sultan Ahmad against the Portuguese mentions only two Portuguese words. Only the Portuguese words "*setinggar*" [*sic*] from "*espingarda*" ("shotgun") and "*Dewas*" from "*Deus*" ("God") are found in the Krusenstern MS. This indirectly shows that this version of the *Sejarah Melayu* was written just after the period of the conquest of Melaka.

However, in Narrative 28 of the Krusenstern MS, the words "*kapitan*", "*kapitan mor*", "*wizurai*", or its variant "*bizurai*", have been written by one of the manuscript's copyists. Other words found are "*ghali*" (from "*galé*"), "*ghalias*" ("*galeaca*" or "*galeaō*"), "*ghali panjang*", "*fusta*" and "*peluru*" [فلورود] (from "*pelouro*", meaning "cannon ball").

Looking at the Portuguese loan words in the Blagden manuscript, such as "*sinyor*" (from "*senhor*"), "*gereja*" (from "*igreja*" for "church") and others used in the major popular versions of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, it can also be deduced that the presence of words such as "*karakah*" (from Spanish "*caraca*", an ancient ship), "*réal*"⁸ (from Portuguese "*real*") "*cepiaw*" (from Portuguese "*chapéu*" meaning "hat"), "*soldadu*" (from "*soldado*" for "soldier"), "*beranda*" (from Portuguese "*veranda*" for "veranda"), and "*wardi*" (from "*ordi*", meaning "instruction" or "order") found in the Shellabear and Abdullah editions, must have entered the Malay vocabulary in the early seventeenth century. Words of Spanish and Dutch origins may also indicate that both the Abdullah and Shellabear versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* and the manuscript used by John Leyden for his English translation were not written or copied earlier than the seventeenth century. Further to that, the presence of the word "*manggusta*" (from Portuguese "*mangostaō*") in a *pantun* in both the Blagden recension and the Raffles 18 (see Narrative 24), which cannot be found in anywhere else in the other versions also indicate that the Blagden manuscript was copied by a copyist who was already familiar with the mangosteen fruit. This may indicate that both manuscripts were copied later than the versions that end with the chapter of the killing of Tun Ali Hati, meaning that the Raffles 18 may not be the earliest version of the *Malay Annals*.

Over the last five hundred years, the Malay language, which has always been exposed to foreign influences in terms of its linguistic development, has clearly been enriched in terms of its vocabulary by the Portuguese language. After making its way into the classical text of the *Sejarah Melayu*, Portuguese words soon crept into daily use. Today, like the other foreign words found in the Malay language, one can

easily notice the presence of several Malay words of Portuguese origin as well. For the purposes of easy recognition, these words can be categorised into clusters which cover areas such as navigation and trade, furniture and household items, food and leisure, and entertainment.

Words pertaining to navigation, which have already been discussed with regard to their presence in the *Malay Annals*, also include words concerning trade as shown below:

Words pertaining to navigation		
Malay	Portuguese	Meaning
baluarti	baluarte	bulwark
beledu	veludo	velvet
bendera	bandeira	flag; banner
bulu	velo	fleece; wool
cit	citao	chintz
cita	chita	calico; cotton print
kernu	corno	powderhorn
lancang	lancão	large launch; barge
lancar	lançar	to launch
lelong	leilão	auction
limau	limão	lemon
sisa	sisa	transfer tax
Words pertaining to furniture and the house		
almari	armário	cupboard, closet
baldi	balde	bucket, pail
bangku	banco	bench, stool
beranda	varanda	veranda
jendela	janela	window
lampu	lâmpião	a large lamp
meja	mesa	table
mertul	martelo	hammer
pita	fita	tape
tangki	tanque	tank
Words pertaining to leisure and games		
bola	bola	ball
biola	viola	violin
boneka	boneca	doll
dadu	dado	dice
pesta	festa	party
tambur	tambor	drum
Words pertaining to positions		
amar	amar	to love; to like very much, as in the honorific Seri Amar

gornardor	governador	governor
kampitan	capitao	captain
mandur	mando	authority
merinyu	meirinho	inspector
mesteri	mestre	a master hand at anything
padri	padre	priest, church minister
pakenira	faccioniaria	factionary, partisan

Words pertaining to food

Bolu	bolo	cake
keju	queijo	cheese
kubis	couves	cabbage
labu	nabo	turnip, pumpkin
mentega	manteiga	butter
pau	pão	bread
roti paong	pan	Bread, usually the loaf kind
salai	sale	salted meat
terigu	trigo	flour

Words pertaining to common items

bantal	avental	pillow
butang	butão	button
cerutu	charuto	cigar
fideru	vedro	glass
garpu	garfo	fork
kemeja	comesa	shirt
kereta	carreta	cart, vehicle
kersang	coracao	brooch
pena	pena	pen; feather pen
peniti	alfinete	pin
perada	perada	tinsel, gold foil
petam	fito	band; tape
renda	renda	lace
roda	roda	wheel
sabun	sabão	soap
sepatu	sapatao	shoe
tinta	tinta	ink
tuala	toalha	towel

Others

bersiar	passier	to take a walk
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dari	dali	from
gagau	gago	dumb, stammer
gelojoh	geluso	gluttonous
kisar	pisar	to pound, hand mill for rice; motion in circle
meski [pun]	masque	even though
minggu	domingo	Sunday
palsu	falso	false
saku	saco	pocket
sekolah	escolar	school
tempoh	tempo	time, period
tentu	tanto	so much, as much; surely
tukar	trocar	to change

Malay words that have been absorbed by Portuguese

amouco	from <i>amok</i>	frenzied attack
baileu	from <i>balai</i>	audience-hall
baju	from <i>baju</i>	coat
bende	from <i>bende</i>	okra
calaluz	from <i>kelulus</i>	a type of boat
ducão	from <i>dusun</i>	orchard
durião	from <i>durian</i>	durian
ganiços	from <i>ganas</i>	violent
gongo	from <i>gong</i>	gong
jambo	from <i>jambu</i>	guava (Malay apple)
Malaio	from <i>Melayu</i>	Malay
Malaico	from <i>bahasa Melayu</i>	Malay language
para, paro	from <i>perahu</i>	a boat
rota	from <i>rotan</i>	rattan
sagu	from <i>sagu</i>	sago
sampana	from <i>sampan</i>	sampan
tuaca	from <i>tuak</i>	toddy
velejar	from <i>berlayar</i>	to sail
veniaga	from <i>berniaga</i>	to trade

From the above list it seems clear that many Portuguese words which have crept into the Malay language are words that concern navigation and trade merchandise. There are a few words concerning furniture, but certainly very few words concerning games and pastimes or even the arts. It appears that a few words in the Malay language have also been incorporated into the vocabulary of modern Portuguese. This bilateral exchange of vocabulary is quite natural, considering the fact that the Portuguese ruled Melaka from 1511 until 1641. The existence of the *mestiço* (mixed-race) Portuguese community in Melaka today is another piece of evidence of the Portuguese presence that even exceeded the period of the Melaka sultanate. But Portuguese history in Melaka also recorded the bitter hatred harboured by the

conquerors of Melaka, especially Afonso Dalboquerque and his lieutenants, towards the *Bendahara* of Melaka between 1509 and 1511. It is therefore not surprising that the Malay word “*bandarra*” that crept into the Portuguese language bears the meaning of “loafer”, “idler”, “sluggard”. In relation to that, the word “*bandalheira*” gives the meaning of “low behaviour”.

The period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was indeed a new era for the development of the Malay language. It was a period of rapid change for Southeast Asia. Anthony Reid calls it the “age of commerce”, which saw the port cities, especially in the Malay World, coming closer to each other via maritime links established long before the arrival of the Europeans. This link was further promoted by the widespread acceptance of the Malay language as the *lingua franca* of the region. When the Dutch arrived to establish their challenge to Portuguese dominance, the Malay language continued to respond to European culture by borrowing numerous elements from the Dutch, and later, the English languages.

¹ According to Macgregor (1956: 25) the Portuguese attacked the capital of Johor in 1535 and 1536.

² There is however a slight confusion in the narrative when the copyist mistakenly identified the Viceroy as the one leading the attack, while at the same time stating that the *Kapitan Mor* himself reported the incident to the Viceroy at Goa.

³ Spanish forces defeated Maluku in 1606 under the governor of the Philippines, Don Pedro de Acuna. See Andaya (1993: 19).

⁴ It is spelt /alif /ya/ ra / mim /dal / (a-y-r-m-d).

⁵ John Leyden translated the description as: “four great ships, five large carracks, for galleons”; at Goa another “three ships, eight galleasses and four galleons and four fasta, in all being forty-three ...”

⁶ Galleys are ships with oars while “*pencalang*” are lookout ships.

⁷ Pinnaces, called “*fusta*” in Portuguese, are small boats which form part of the Portuguese war vessels.

⁸ See Chapter 31 in Abdullah Munsyi (Situmorang & Teeuw 1952: 289) and Shellabear (1967: 197).

Mystic letters and their influence in the Malay World

Introduction

The beginnings of the idea of writing can be traced back to the fourth millennium BCE and earlier in Mesopotamia. It subsequently spread to the Indus Valley and China, then westward to Egypt, Anatolia and Minoan Crete. In Mesopotamian mythology, Nabu, the son of Marduk, king of the Babylonian pantheon, is credited with the invention of writing. Through Plato, we know that Egyptian mythology, on the other hand, attributed the discovery of writing to Thoth, who was also the god of sorcery. The idea of writing having a mystical influence also found its place among Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the post-biblical Jewish tradition, Adam or Enoch was often referred to as the discoverer of the alphabet, magic, alchemy and astrology. The Holy Qur'an also associates writing with divine revelation. The angel Gabriel transmitted God's revelations to the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. by asking the latter to recite from the writings that Gabriel brought down from Heaven.

Mystical letters in the Qur'an

Until today, scholars studying the verses in the Holy Qur'an have not been able to fully explain the meaning of the mystical letters that are often found preceding certain verses. Much speculation surrounds these mystical letters (*Alif, Lam Mim* etc.). A mystical thirteenth-century Sufi text holds that all of God's secrets are hidden in the Holy Qur'an. The founder of the Hurufi sect in the fourteenth century, FadlAllah (d. 796 H/1394 CE) from Astrabad, Persia, started life as a Sufi and taught his followers that God revealed Himself to the world through the thirty-two letters of the Persian alphabet. He claimed that the totality of these letters and their numerical sum was the manifestation of God Himself. More will be discussed below. Although Sufism was born out of Islam, and drew its inspiration from the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions, its development was strongly influenced by Hellenistic philosophy and Christian asceticism (Nicholson, 1949: 212–213). One notices, for example, the neo-Platonic influence on the symbolism attached to letters of the alphabet. Pythagoras (c. 580–500 BCE) gave a central place to numbers and his philosophy influenced Plato who, it is said, prepared the intellectual ground for letter and number mysticism (The Encyclopedia of Religion, 1: 217). The belief in the occult uses of the alphabet and numerology appeared to have had a widespread influence in the Middle Ages, especially among Jews and Muslims.

Among Muslims, the fourteen mystic letters which, either in their combined or singular forms, are found at the head of the 29 Suras of the Qur'an, constituting half the total number of letters in the Arabic alphabet. The letters (*huruf*) are:

- *Alif Lam Ra* (ALR), at the head of Suras 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15;
- *Alif Lam Mim* (ALM), at head of Suras 2, 3, 29, 30, 31 and 32;
- *Alif Lam Mim Ra* (ALMR), at the head of Sura 13;
- *Alif Lam Mim Sin* (ALMS), at the head of Sura 7;
- *Ha Mim* (HM) at the head of Suras 40, 41, 43, 44, 45 and 46;
- *Ha Mim 'Ayn Sin Qaf* (HM 'ASQ), at the head of Sura 42;
- *Sad* (S), at the head of Sura 38;
- *Ta' Sin* (TS), at the head of Sura 27;
- *Ta' Sin Mim* (TSM), at the head of Suras 26 and 28;

- *Ta' Ha* (TH), at the head of Sura 20;
- *Qaf* (Q), at the head of Sura 50;
- *Ya' 'Ayn Sad* (QHY 'AS), at the head of Sura 19;
- *Nun* (N), at the head of Sura 68; and
- *Ya Sin* (YS), at the head of Sura 36.

Until today, they continue to mystify many Muslims and for centuries aroused inconclusive debates which resulted in several speculations among both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike.¹ As stated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, in his introduction to *Sura Yunus*, the “[a]bbreviated letters are mystic symbols, about whose meaning there is no authoritative explanation ... but no one should be dogmatic in speculation about mystic symbols” (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an – Introduction to Sura X*, p.481).

The basic elements

The twenty-eight letters are divided into four categories of seven letters each, which correspond to the four basic elements: fire, air, water and earth. *Alif* (the first letter) is fiery, *ba* (the second) is airy, *jim* (the third) is watery and *dhal* (the fourth) is earthy. Then the sequence begins again, running through the whole alphabet. Thus, we have:

- Seven fiery letters, namely: *alif*, [ا], *dhal* [ذ], *taa* [ط], *mim* [م], *fa* [ف], *sin* [س] and *shin* [ش];
- Seven airy letters, namely: *ba* [ب], *ta* [ت], *daad* [ض], *waw* [و], *ya* [ي], *nun* [ن] and *sin* [ص];
- Seven watery letters, namely: *jim* [ج], *zay* [ز], *sin* [س], *zaa* [ظ], *qaf* [ق], *waw* [و] and *ghayn* [غ]; and
- Seven earthy letters, namely: *ha* [ح], *kha* [خ], *dal* [د], *lam* [ل], *ra* [ر], *'ayn* [ع] and *ghayn* [غ].

Each category has roles in divination, magic and astrology. The fiery letters were known to have been used in divination and magic as well as in order to ward off any evils with cold characteristics, or to increase heat whenever it was desired, whether in the physical or astral plane. Meanwhile, the watery letters were used to predict and ward off all the ills associated with heat, such as various kinds of fevers. The mystique that these letters possessed, however, could only be unveiled by those with the inner vision (*al-kashf*). Only those who were able to read the mystical properties of the letters could penetrate the secrets of God. Thus, to the Sufis and members of the various *Tarekat* (Sufi orders) in the Islamic world, each of the twenty-eight letters in the Qur'anic alphabet were recognised as having a numerical value of a mystical nature.

The letter *Alif* (A), for example, is said to have a numerical value of one. One is symbolic of the one God, and thus *Alif* represents Allah. The word “Allah” is composed of four letters, which correspond to the four elements: earth, water, air and fire. Sufis from the *Naqshabandya* order point out that in writing, the letter *Alif* cannot be joined by any other letter to form a word in the Arabic script. On the other hand, any other letter that begins to form a word may need the *Alif*. According to the Sufis, this is analogous to Allah being independent. But His creations would be dependent on Him (as symbolised by the need for other letters of the Qur'anic alphabet). Another example is the letter *Ba* (B) which has the numerical value of two, and stands for *al-Baqi*, a word that means “everlasting”. The Sufis point out that Allah, as shown by the Qur'anic verse in Surah *an-Nahl* (16: 96), is indeed everlasting. Sufis also believe that *Ba* is also endowed with the mystical symbolism of embracing the entire meaning of the Qur'an, while the Syi'ites believe that the dot underneath the letter represents Ali.

The spread of Islam

Based on archaeological evidence and written sources (mainly Chinese and Arab), the people in the Malay World had already been in contact with Muslim traders and travellers since the middle of the ninth century. Muslim gravestones have been found in Champa, Indochina, and later in the twelfth and thirteen centuries in Samudera-Pasai in northern Sumatra, and Java. In Sumatra, the date inscribed on the gravestone of Sultan Malik al-Saleh is 696 H/1297 CE. His son, Malik al-Zahir, died in 726 H/1326 CE (al-Attas, 2011: 26–27). In Malaysia, the first instance of the Arabic alphabet being used to record the Malay language was carved on the Terengganu Stone (*Batu Bersurat Terengganu*), which was dated back to 708 H/1308 CE.² Based on archaeological evidence, there is presently a consensus among historians that Islam found a stronger foothold in Southeast Asia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, particularly in the Malay peninsula, the Malay province in southern Thailand, Borneo and the islands of Java, Sumatra, Celebes and the Philippines, especially after local rulers embraced the religion. As for Champa in Indochina, even though the gravestone belonging to a Persian Muslim gives the date of 1039 CE, there is no other evidence to show that Islam was widely adopted by the Champa Malays, in spite of the fact that a Cambodian Malay king named Reameathipadai I (r. 1642–58 CE) had embraced Islam and took the name Ibrahim. That the process of Islamisation in these regions took place only at a gradual pace has been shown to be true by many historians, although how and by whom the process was undertaken is still subject to an ongoing debate.

Archaeological evidence and local literary sources, however, seem to point to the important role of Sufism in the propagation of Islam in its early beginnings, although the part played by Muslim traders could not be discounted. Malay literary sources also appear to show that the *da'wah* movement undertaken by both Sufis and members of the trading community from the Middle East also involved Indo-Persian missionaries from the Indian subcontinent. But when these Muslims first came to Southeast Asia, they probably encountered the magico-religious practices of the local people, which had their roots in Hindu-Buddhist beliefs. Malay manuscripts which were copied over the centuries, especially from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, seem to have originated in a much earlier period. Manuscripts elucidating the practice of divination and magic in the Malay Archipelago (as manifested in astrology, time-reckoning practices and some form of calendrical system, talismans, medicinal magic etc.) appear to suggest that such practices possessed elements of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Alphabet mysticism and its influence in Southeast Asia

The mystic letters most often used in the Malay Archipelago in the late sixteenth century, or possibly earlier, were *abjd* (ا ب ج د), *hawz* (ه و ز) (pronounced *abjad hawaz*). The earliest evidence of the use of mystic letters is found in the manuscript studied by Syed Naguib al-Attas, the *Aqaid of Nasafi* dated 998 H, the year of *Ba* (1590 CE) (al-Attas, 1988). The role of the mystical letters in the determining the name of a particular *Hegira* year, as practised in the Malay Archipelago, has already been partly discussed in a separate work by this writer. But perhaps I shall need to look at it again and try to relate it with the process of Islamisation in Southeast Asia. I shall also try to look at other cultural aspects in the Malay World that have been influenced by mystical letters, namely in the areas of divination, magic and the effort to spread the teachings of Islam through mysticism.

As late as the nineteenth century, Muslims in Southeast Asia still described the *Hegira* calendrical system as *Tahun Kamariya*, or Lunar Year. It was based on the simple eight-year cycle (the small *dawr* or *daur kecil*) as opposed to the more complex 30-year cycle introduced by Caliph Umar and the 120-year cycle (the big *dawr* or *daur besar*). The eight-year cycle was a unique system practised only among the Malay peoples of Southeast Asia. According to this calendrical system, each particular year in the eight-year cycle was associated with a *huruf*. As to how a particular *huruf* was assigned to a particular year, a nineteenth-century Malay manuscript which was, I believe, only a copy of an older manuscript, explained that:

Not knowing the year that is to be assigned with the alphabet [*abjad*], you should take the year of the Prophet (s.a.w.), cast off eights, until the *Hegira* year is used up...

This really means that the *Hegira* year of say, 1153, should be divided by eight and the remainder, which would be one, will give the signature of that particular year as an *Alif* year. A remainder of two would give the year as *Ba*, whereas a remainder of three would be named a *Jim* year, and so on and so forth. This simple way of determining the signature of a particular year was based on the notion that the small *dawr* was based on the seven letters of the Arabic alphabet (*Alif, Ha, Jim, Zay, Dal, Ba, Waw*, plus a repeat of one letter (which was either *Dal* or *Jim*) that made up the mnemonic, AHJZDBWD (pronounced *ahjzadabuda*). These seven letters (plus one) were also adopted by the Muslims of peninsular Malaysia, Sumatera, Java and Buton (in the Moluccas, eastern Indonesia), as well as the southern Philippines, as signatures for the Muslim lunar months of *Muharram* (*Alif*), *Safar* (*Jim*), *Raib'ul-awal* (*Dal*), *Rabi'ul-akhir* (*Waw*), *Jamadir-awal* (*Zay*), *Jamadir-akhir* (*Ba*), *Rajab* (*Jim*), *Sya'ban* (*Ha*), *Ramadhan* (*Waw*), *Shawal* (*Alif*), *Dhulkaedah* (*Ba*) and *Dhulhijjah* (*Dal*). The numerical values for these are as follows:

Alif 1

Ha 5

Jim 3

Zay 7

Dal 4

Ba 2

Waw 6

Before the establishment of Islam, the Malays of Patani (now part of southern Thailand) used to name the different years of their calendrical cycle after the names of animals such as the tiger, snake, goat, fowl or deer. This practice of designating the years with the names of animals continued, although temporarily, after the eight-year cycle was adopted. In a manuscript that appeared to be a copy of a much earlier document (see *Maleis handschriften* 107. 85, no. 3), each of the above letters was assigned with the name of an animal; thus the year of *Alif* had, according to one manuscript (from Sumatra?), the rat as its signature; if it was a *Ha* year, then the animal was the tiger; whereas the year of *Jim* would have the mouse deer (chevrotain) as the signature. The animal for *Zay* was the dragon; *Dal awal* (the earlier *Dal*), the snake; *Ba*, the goat; *Waw*, the tiger [*sic*]; and *Dal akhir* (the latter *Dal*), the deer. Nevertheless, names of animals assigned to the cycle varied from region to region. In peninsular Malaya, the animal designated for *Alif* was the buffalo; for *Ba* it was the goat; the signature for the *Jim* year was the tiger; while the signature for *Waw* was the fowl.

We think the adoption of these seven letters to construct a simple indigenous Muslim calendar in Southeast Asia had something to do with the process of Islamising the indigenous people of the Malay Archipelago. The prefatory formula "*Bism il-lahi r-rahmani r-rahim*" (in the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful), which all good Muslims utter when they begin to do any work, is composed of 19 letters. These letters represent the 19 spirits guarding the Gates of Hell. The *Fatihah* which, being the foundation of the Qur'an, is the first Sura in the holy book, and is made up of seven sentences, which correspond to the seven heavens, seven earths, seven planets and seven days of the week. Indeed, the choice of the seven letters by the people of the Malay World must have been due to the significance of the letters in the Qur'an, since the letters symbolised the seven stars or planets. The Qur'anic verse (Q 17: 14) mentions the seven heavens, while seven also refers to the Seven Gates of Hell (Q 15: 44). In Sura 31, verse 27, there is also mention of seven oceans. Ibn 'Arabi wrote that God had seven main divine attributes: Hearing, Living, Seeing, Willing, Ability, Knowledge and Speaking.³ Yet even though seven was perceived as a divine number, one more letter from the same group of seven mystic letters had to be repeated in order to make up the eight letters of the small *dawr*.

For the Malays of the peninsula, Aceh, Patani, the southern Philippines and Buton Island, it was the letter *Dal*, whose numerical value was four, which was named *Dal akhir*. The Javanese and the Sundanese,

on the other hand, chose the letter *Jim* which they called *Jim akhir* (the latter *Jim*). According to Shi'ite mystics, this number symbolised the eight heavens (the last being the location of God's throne), and had also been perceived as an auspicious number since time immemorial. In Persian literature, it was mentioned that while there were seven Hells, there were eight Paradises (Schimmel, 1993: 156–157). Beyond the seven spheres of the planets there was an eighth sphere, where the fixed stars were located. In ancient Babylonian myths, god resided in the eighth storey of the Babylonian temple. One should also not forget that during the pre-Islamic period, Buddhism was practised in several parts of the archipelago, particularly in Sumatra and Java, in the seventh and eighth centuries. In Buddhism we find the eight-petalled lotus, which in turn became a symbol of the eightfold path, which formed the fundamentals of the Buddha's teachings. Before the advent of Islam, the system of belief practised by the local population could be one that was either based on animism or one of the Indic religions (either Hinduism or Buddhism).

Besides their application as signatures of the eight-year cycle, the *huruf* were also used for the purposes of magic and divination⁴ in the Malay World. When placed in magic squares (*wafaq*), for example, they could be used to cure an illness. In divination, each particular year was believed to bring either good or bad weather, or good luck or misfortune. It was, for example, claimed that in an *Alif* year, heavy rain would fall; while the *Ha* year was marked by drought, which might even cause the death of many a young man. The *Jim* year would bring so much heat as well as strong winds where many people would be affected by illness. On the other hand, the *Zay* year would bring chilly weather and the rice fields would yield a good harvest, even though the year would also be marked by population unrest. The year of the early *Dal* would see widespread illness, conflicts and quarrels among the people, as well as torrential rain. The *Ba* year would see widespread drought, and many would be afflicted by sickness – however, many babies would be born. In the *Waw* year, the weather would be cool, but friction would occur among the people owing to their laxity in performing their religious duties to God. The year of the latter *Dal* would have less rainfall, but would yield a good harvest. But there would be a curse upon the people due to their failure in upholding the truth.

The letter signature for a particular year would also be used to forecast certain events. For example, if an eclipse of the sun were to take place on Sunday in the month of *Safar* in an *Alif* year, that would signal the death of the Raja and acts of slander and calumny would abound; if on the other hand, it happened on a Saturday in the month of *Rabi'ul-awal* or *Rabi'ul-akhir* in the *Ha* year, war would break out, which would result in a shortage of food, although the country would be spared from destruction and no death would take place.

The syncretistic trend that one notices in the practice of mysticism clearly shows that the early propagators of Islam were accommodating enough to maintain continuity with indigenous traditional beliefs and practices in order to gain new converts. That the religion was indeed spread in a gradual manner with much tolerance and without the use of any form of coercion was one reason why Islam in most parts of the Malay World was syncretistic in form and relatively peaceful in its dissemination.

Before the adoption of the Malay-Muslim calendrical system that was based on the eight-year cycle, the Malay (and also Javanese) notion of time-reckoning was perceived in the context of a period of the cycle of five, called *kutika lima* (lit. five [ominous] times).⁵ Although the five-times-cycle was indigenous, the number five was nevertheless symbolic of the five distinguishing marks which, as mentioned in one of the *Puranas*, were supposed to represent creation, secondary creation, genealogy, the reigns of Manus⁶ and the history of the patriarchs of the lunar and solar dynasties.⁷ Based on the notion of the *kutika lima*, the day was divided into five parts (namely sunrise, forenoon, noon, afternoon and sunset) and five days (from the first to the fifth) to form a cycle. In the beginning, the main purpose of time-reckoning was to determine the appropriate time for agricultural activities. For the Javanese, the *kutika lima* was for determining market days in the principal villages or districts. In the earlier days, each *kutika* was named after a Hindu deity from among the pantheon, whose names in the order of the five periods that made up the cycle were: Meswara or Maheswara (Shiva), Bisnu (Vishnu), Berhama (Brahma), Seri (Sri, wife of Vishnu) and Kala (or Kali, wife of Shiva).⁸

After the establishment of Islam, these names from the Hindu pantheon were substituted with the names of Ahmad (another name for the Prophet), Jibra'il (Gabriel), Ibrahim (Abraham), Yusuf (Joseph), and Azrai'l ('Azrael). The "Islamisation" of such names had also resulted in the five-times-cycle being called the *Sa'at Lima*, or Five Ominous Moments. In terms of purpose, the *Sa'at Lima* closely resembled that of the *Kutika Lima*, i.e. to interpret what were the good and bad days or times. The following chart illustrates the divisions of the cycle of five:

	Sunrise	Forenoon	Noon	Afternoon	Sunset
Day 1	Ahmad	Jibra'il	Ibrahim	Yusuf	'Azrael
Day 2	Jibra'il	Ibrahim	Yusuf	'Azrael	Ahmad
Day 3	Ibrahim	Yusuf	'Azrael	Ahmad	Jibra'il
Day 4	Yusuf	'Azrael	Ahmad	Jibra'il	Ibrahim
Day 5	'Azrael	Ahmad	Jibra'il	Ibrahim	Yusuf

Like in the *Kutika Lima*, the five days in the the *Sa'at Lima* were divided into five periods. When the chart was applied for the purpose of divination, it was known as *tilek*. Its implementation marked the beginning of astrology for the people of Southeast Asia. Good luck and misfortune depended on the specific day and time. For example, if one were to lose a buffalo or a bullock during the Ahmad division (which was at sunrise on the first day), the reading would be that the animal would have gone southward but would be recovered eventually; if good news was received, it would most likely be true; and any bad news received would likely be false. The moment (*sa'at*) would be an auspicious time for any kind of work, such as going on a voyage or sailing; it would also be profitable for planting rice as well as for trading. It would also be a good time for going to war – however, one needed to wear white clothes and face slightly south-east, and pray to God (Skeat, 1984: 548). Colour was also important, and continued the practice of associating the Hindu deities with colours. For example, Maheswara's colour was yellow-white, Vishnu's green, Brahma's red, Sri's white and Kala's yellow-black (in a separate manuscript, Ali replaced Kala, and was associated with the colour black).⁹

As the spread of Islam became more extensive, the practice of inscribing the names of Hindu deities on magic squares was replaced by the introduction of magic squares with the letters of the Qur'anic alphabet (with their corresponding numerical values). These squares, which formed part of *nujum* in Malay magic, made use of numerals based on the mystic letters, or the names of God, angels, demons as well as those of the planets. The mystic letters or their numerical values were inserted into the magic square, and arranged so that the addition of horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines would give the same total. In the example below, in a magic square of five, the numbers totalled up from all directions (horizontal, vertical or diagonal lines) add up to 65. They could also be expressed by the mystic letters as shown below:

17	24	1	8	15
23	5	7	14	16
4	6	13	20	22
10	12	19	21	3
11	18	25	2	9
س	ح	ا	خ	ف
ع	ن	ز	هـ	ث
ت	ر	م	و	د
ج	ش	ق	ل	ي
ط	ب	ذ	ص	ك

Further developments in Malay divination in various parts of the archipelago then led to the introduction of the *Bintang Tujuh* or Seven Heavenly Bodies, consisting of *Zuhal* (Saturn), *Mushtari* (Jupiter), *Marikh* (Mars), *Syamsu* (the Sun), *Zuharat* (Venus), *Utarid* (Mercury), and *Qamar* (the Moon). These “planets” were believed to rule the seven ominous moments (*kutika tujuh*), and like the *Bintang Dua Belas* (the twelve constellations), their motions were prescribed by the agency of angels. The astrologers believed that the zodiac was divided into twelve equal parts or Houses. But curiously though, the Malay astrologers were only acquainted with the seven “planets”: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon. It was only later, probably in the late seventeenth or eighteenth century, following the importation of Arabic texts on astronomy and astrology from the Middle East (which were subsequently copied in the Malay courts, such as that of Palembang) that the *Bintang Dua Belas* contained a more complete set of names (See Oxford MS Malay d.1).

Similarly with the existing naming systems, these seven planets were also identified by signs of the zodiac: consisting of *Hamal* (the ram), *Thaur* (the bull), *Jauza* (turtle), *Sartan* (Crab or Cancer), *Asad* (the lion of the tribe of ‘Ali), *Sanilah* (*sic*, *Sunbulah*, the fox), and *Mizan* (the scale). Sometimes, in order to find one’s horoscope, or to identify the name of the animal for his or her star, the name of the person and his mother’s name (or vice versa) should be spelt out so that the numerical values of all the *huruf* could be counted, and the total divided by twelve. The remainder would then reveal his or her horoscope; number one would mean that his star was *Hamal* (the ram) whereas number two would indicate that it was *Thaur* (bullock), and so on.

Letters from both the Arabic script and Malay *abjad*¹⁰ were used in Malay magic, such as the interpretation of dreams and the making of charms and amulets. To interpret dreams, the initial letter of the principal subject in the dream should be identified. If the subject in the dream were to have *Zay* as its first letter, it would mean that the person who dreamt it would be visited by a woman of beauty and that he would receive a gift sent from another place. If the letter *Lam* was dreamt, then one was obliged to give alms to the poor. In the case of dreams, it seems that the letters were not restricted to the Arabic alphabet, but also included Malay-Jawi letters. This differs from the art of making of charms, which fully relied on both the letters in the Holy Qur’an and also the numerical values of the letters. These charms (including love charms) came in the form of diagrams (*raja*h), amulets or talismans (*azimat*) and they consisted of mystic letters, such as *Alif Lam Mim*, *Alif Lam Ra*, or *Ya Sin* and even short Qur’anic verses, or the sacred names of Allah, Muhammad, Ali etc. To most people in the Malay World, the belief in charms and amulets of various kinds was strong and persists today. Charms and amulets were considered helpful not only for making efforts such as warding off demons (*syaitan*), but also in making children breastfeed properly, and even preventing crops from being damaged by maggots, rats and wild boars (Skeat, 1984: 567). As late as the nineteenth century, it was a common belief among Muslims in both Malaysia and Indonesia, and perhaps also in the Philippines and Thailand, that invulnerability could be conferred upon by charms and amulets. This need was increasingly felt, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia, among those Muslims who took part in uprisings against the colonial powers.

But the influence of the mystic letters in the Malay World was not restricted to the practices of divination, astrology and magic. At a higher plane, the mystic letters of the Qur’an also became a tool for Sufis to implant the spirit of religiosity among Muslims in the Malay Archipelago.

In the history of Islamisation in Southeast Asia, there appeared to be a period when Indo-Persian elements were introduced, probably via India. It should be noted that in the sixteenth century, Persian-speaking merchants from the southern kingdom of the Deccan, where Shi’ism was strong, were already frequenting parts of Siam, the Malay peninsula and Sumatra. When exactly this influence appeared is still hard to say. But in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, Malay texts, which were probably based on copies from an earlier period (as early as the fourteenth century, according to Brakel) strongly suggest that Indo-Persian influence did enter the Malay World, not only in the form of literature, which influenced the writing of classical Malay literary texts, but also Sufi treatises which certainly influenced contemporaneous (or earlier) Malay religious thinking. Thus, it was probably due to this kind of influence

that the notion of the Five Ominous Times was later accompanied by the symbol of the hand of Fatima, with the five fingers representing the *panjitan*, which included the names of Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn.

An example of Shi'ite influence on Malay belief can also be seen from the invocation in a manuscript that that reads:

Tegang teguh urat aku; teguhlah mani dalam tubuh aku; Hai lah s[yl]ahid, was-was ku tikam jua; menuang batu, tempakan hamba besi kursani akan tuang; tuang kalam aku gagah; gagahaku seperti Ali, kuat ku sa ku [sic] seperti 'Ali; berkat do'a putaran puting beliung; hagh sir Saidi, berkat do'a pengajaran guruku yang sah; berkat La ilaha 'illa'Llah. (Stiff and tense are my veins, so let the sperm be robust in my body, O martyr, with anxiety do I pierce, cast me a stone; wrought me a metal of iron; decant this dick of mine for strength; as gallant as Ali, so that my strength is as potent as Ali's; thanks to the cycle of petition of the whirlwind; the secret truth Sir, by the blessing of the teaching of my rightful teacher; by dint of La ila ha'illa'Llah Muhammadar'rasulu'Llah).

Manuscripts which were largely copied in Malay between the late sixteenth and nineteenth centuries have shown that the Malay World had been acquainted with Sufism, especially in the late sixteenth century, when the great Malay philosopher from Aceh, Hamzah Fansuri (d. 1590 CE) played a major role in disseminating the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of being), the doctrine that many scholars attributed to Ibn 'Arabi. It was at this point in time that the debate on God's transcendence and the relationship between Him and His creations generated lengthy polemics in Aceh and drew adherents from places as far away as Patani and Buton. It is interesting to note that after more than half a century of intense discussion by the followers of Hamzah, especially Shamsuddin of Pasai (a.k.a. Shamsuddin al-Sumatra'i, d. 1630 CE) and his successor, Shaikh Kamaluddin Ashi, an Indian Sufi from Randir called Syekh Nuruddin bin Ali bin Hasanji bin Muhammad Hamid (d. 1658, also known as Nuruddin ar-Raniri) arrived in Aceh in 1637 and was elected by Iskandar II (r. 1636–41) to be the *Shaikh al-Islam*. It seemed that following the death of Shamsuddin, Kamaluddin had allowed the teachings of the *wahdat al-wujud* and the *martbat tujuh* (the seven grades of existence), intertwined with the doctrine of *Nur Muhammad* (the Muhammadan light), to be spread all over the country to the point that the sanctity of the Shar'ia was threatened – this eventually drew the wrath of ar-Raniri, who brought it to the attention of Iskandar II. Despite the lengthy debates on the matter, it seemed that Shaikh Kamaluddin refused to repent and this resulted in his execution by the ruler and the confiscation and burning of works on the *wahdat al-wujud*. It was within this context of religious schisms that the mystic letters of the Qur'an were applied to provide a reinterpretation of the doctrine of the unity of existence.

In a manuscript authored by ar-Raniri himself, the mystical properties of each letter of the Holy Qur'an were explained with the purpose of providing a supposedly correct interpretation of the meanings of the seven grades of existence, as espoused by the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*. In his treatise, ar-Raniri wrote, for example, that *Alif* was the signature of God, the divine grade of existence; *Ba* was the signature for the grade of *wahda*, with the dot signifying the Reality of Muhammad; *Ta* was the signature for the second *tajalli* (emanation) and the two dots signified that Allah's presence was not on the 'Arash, throne or heaven; neither was He on earth, nor in the bodies of men. In his description of the letter *Mim*, Syekh Nuruddin ar-Raniri wrote: "Regarding the letter *Mim*, it signifies that the Reality [*Hakikat*] of Muhammad does not contain the light (*Nur*) of Muhammad, and that it was Gabriel who brought the divine revelation to Muhammad".¹¹

It is clear that by elucidating the mystical properties of each letter of the Qur'an, ar-Raniri, who was very much determined to stamp out the influence of what he perceived as an anti-Shari'a movement, espoused by those whom, so he claimed, had misconceptions about the doctrine of the unity of being and the light of Muhammad. By declaring them as *kufr* and by having their leaders killed, ar-Raniri believed that he had indeed tried to curb the spread of what was considered as heretical doctrines. He did it, so it seemed, by carrying out a spiritual cleansing in Aceh before he was expelled in 1643.

Nuruddin ar-Raniri's fear of the declining influence of the Shari'a in Aceh was not without foundation,

since he saw that the religiosity of the Acehnese was being undermined by their distorted understanding of the *wahdat al-wujud*. Since the ideas about the existence of God and His essence were expounded upon by Ibn ‘Arabi through the allusions he made to the twenty letters of the Qur’an, it must have also dawned upon ar-Raniri to make use of the letters in order to clarify the essence of God and His existence. Later, sometime in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, another prominent ulama of Aceh, Syekh Abdul Rauf al-Sinkil (1615–93 CE), even saw it appropriate to use the title “*Dakaik al-Huruf*” (the details of the Letters) in his commentary about the *wahdat al-wujud*.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it becomes clear that Islamisation in the Malay world was influenced by the mystic letters of the Qur’anic alphabet. While at some stage the letters became useful to the Malays, Javanese and others in their practice of divination, magic and their understanding of the occult and astrology, the letters also became a useful formula in the effort to spread the teaching of Islam through mysticism.

¹ See the discussion on the “Mystic Letters of the Koran” by Arthur Jeffrey in *The Muslim World* (13), 1924.

² See Ahmat Adam (2017). Syed Naguib Al-Attas (1970) is wrong in his reading of the date as 1303. He had missed the word /lapan/ [لاپان] (eight) which is a continuation of the words “*tujuh ratus dua*” inscribed on the left-hand corner of the stone. “*Dua lapan*” is the Old Malay word for “eight”.

³ See Mohamed Haj Yusef, *Ibn ‘Arabi-time and Cosmology*, Routledge, 2008: 81–84.

⁴ Emilie Savage-Smith makes the distinction that while magic seeks to alter the course of events, usually by calling upon a superhuman force (that is, God or one of His intercessors), divination (*kihana*) attempts to predict future events, or gain information about things unseen without the intention of altering them (2004: xiii).

⁵ Under this system the day is divided into five parts, and five days forms a cycle.

⁶ Manus (plural form of Manu), the collective progenitors of the human race, usually referred to as “the Manus”. See W. H. Johnson, *Oxford Dictionary of Hinduism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009:199.

⁷ Ibid., 229.

⁸ Besides the *Kutika Lima*, the above names from the Hindu pantheon were also inscribed in magic squares of five for magical purposes.

⁹ See the manuscript (which unfortunately is partly torn and in a bad state) that is bound to MSS 260, kept at the National Library, Malaysia.

¹⁰ The Malay alphabet is based on the Arabic, which has been adapted to accommodate Malay phonemes.

¹¹ The attempt to explain the concepts of unity of existence and the Reality of Muhammad was also made through the *syair* called *Syair Hijiyya* (poem of letters). Through the poem, the anonymous author analysed the meaning inherent in the letters that make up the name of the Prophet Muhammad.

Orientalism and traditional Malay literature

The *Malay Annals* and traditional Malay literature

The *Sejarah Melayu*, has been known by many names. Originally known as the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, yakni *pituturan segala raja-raja*, it was this title by which it was originally known in the ancient Malay courts. It was also known as the *Hikayat Melayu* in the nineteenth century and eventually erroneously translated into English as the *Malay Annals*. It is the only other surviving text – besides the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* – of the earliest Malay literary works and has been regarded as the finest and most famous of all the Malay classics. Over five centuries it has undergone several editions, interpolations and revisions by alleged authors, copyists or court writers, thus resulting in no less than 44 manuscripts (both complete and incomplete) of the *Sejarah Melayu* worldwide. Looking at the principal theme that runs through its narratives, there is little doubt that the original author(s) intended to narrate the fortunes and misfortunes that befell the Malay Rajas of the Melaka line.

It was written with the purpose of providing a memorial for the Malay Rajas, and the genealogy of the Melaka Sultans together with a chronicle of the Malay royal ceremonials. Underlying all these was the subtle instructional advice for Malay Rajas of the folly of departing from the ancient covenant between Demang Lebar Daun and Sang Supraba (Sri Tri Buana), which underscored the responsibilities between subjects and rulers.

Authorship of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*

Until now, the authorship of the manuscript and the date of its original composition is unresolved. Many believe that it was written in Johor in 1612 by Tun Seri Lanang, who is listed as the “author” of almost all manuscripts of the *Malay Annals* (with the exception of the Raffles 18 and the incomplete Cod. Or. 1704 at the library of the University of Leiden). While the *Bendahara Paduka Raja* (Jelani, 2009: 60, 158) was mentioned as the “author” of the *Malay Annals* by Nuruddin ar-Raniri in *Bustanus-Salatin*, which the latter began to write in 1638, there is no clear evidence that Tun Seri Lanang was the author of the 1612 recension. Tun Seri Lanang was in fact just the copyist of one version of the *Sejarah Melayu*. Despite the inclusion of his name in all later revisions of the *Malay Annals*, other copyists had nevertheless retained the part in the preface of the Raffles 18 which stated that Seri Nara Wangsa, named Tun Bambang, was tasked to “make a chronicle of the genealogy of the Malay Raja” (Raffles 18: preface).

When was the *Sejarah Melayu* revised?

In his 1938 work, Sir Richard Winstedt tried to give the correct date of the rewriting of the *Sejarah Melayu*. He pointed out that the Raffles 18 is the only manuscript providing the correct name of the *Hegira* year of 1021, which was a *Dal Awal*, and also the correct day of the week, which was Sunday, 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* (13 May 1612). But is the Raffles 18 a copy of the oldest draft? F. W. Douglas, who used to possess two manuscripts of the *Malay Annals* (presumed destroyed by the bombing of the Selangor Museum in 1945) had pointed out that the earliest edition was dated 12 *Rabi'ulawal* 1020 H (25 May 1611). This edition was written at Pekan Tuha (Douglas, 1941: 34). Pekan Tuha was the place where 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah, son of Sultan Mahmud Syah, resided. It is worth noting that Munsiy Mohamad Ally's manuscript (MS. 86 DBP) and the Malay MS. 1 of the John Rylands Library in Manchester, which also bear Tun Seri Lanang's name, also show this date: 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1020 *Hegira* (25 May 1611) which was a *Ha* year. It is earlier than the 1612 date. However, the 1020 AH (1611 CE) date raises the question of whether this is the correct date of the *Malay Annals* being revised, and not 1021 AH (1612 CE).¹

Incidentally, the date 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1021 AH would correctly fall on a Sunday, and not Thursday, as given by all other copies that list Tun Seri Lanang's name as the author-editor. Thus one may question why 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* was chosen even though it could be of a different year. The answer lies in the fact that until today, Sunni Muslims recognise this date as the birth date of the Prophet Muhammad, irregardless of it falling on a Sunday or a Thursday.

Orientalism and early studies of the *Sejarah Melayu*

Several generations since its first narration, the *Malay Annals* (which came to be popularly known as the *Sejarah Melayu* since the early nineteenth century), had undergone changes when so-called authors or copyists of later years had interpolations weaved into the original narrative. These recensions were first produced by European Orientalists² whose studies peaked between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first Orientalist to have studied the *Sejarah Melayu*, however, was Father François Valentyn (1666–1727), who served the Dutch Reformed Church in the Dutch East Indies in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. From his study of the *Sejarah Melayu*, Valentyn became exposed to the narratives of the Melaka sultanate which led him to propose the date of the founding of Melaka as 1252 CE, by merely backtracking the reigns of the various Sultans of Melaka. It was also Valentyn who had correctly read the alleged name of the Melakan Laksamana as “Hang Tuha”, based on the Jawi spelling /ta/waw/ha [توه].³

Since the time of Valentyn, Europeans have found themselves fascinated by written works of traditional Malay literature, especially the *Sejarah Melayu*. Students of this literature are therefore quite familiar with names like Petrus van der Vorm (1677), John Leyden (1810), Edouard Dulaurier (1849), William Shellabear (1896) C. O. Blagden (1925) and Sir Richard Winstedt (1938). Winstedt was the last and probably greatest colonial scholar of Malay traditional literature. All these scholars of the east appear to fit in with the definition of “Orientalists” given by Edward Said, who attempted to show that they were not only engaged in an abstract, scholarly phase by trying to understand other cultures, but were also engaged in the making of an imperialist tradition to be adopted by the people whom they colonised.

What is Orientalism?

According to Edward Said,⁴ Orientalists had already been engaged in a process called Orientalism since the early nineteenth century, which converted the so-called “Orient” into a legitimate area of study, of which the West could make authoritative statements. European Orientalism, be it German, British or French, soon emerged to become a kind of intellectual authority over the “Orient” within Western culture (Said 1978: 19).⁵ In other words, Orientalism in the West is the cultural framework within which tangible racism is practised against Asian people. This definition by Said needs to be viewed in the context of nineteenth century colonial Malaya, when indigenous scholars of traditional Malay literature were not yet present. Thus, the first person to transcribe the Jawi text of the Raffles 18 into Romanised Malay was not a Malay, but Winstedt himself in 1938. It was he who asserted that the Raffles 18 version of the *Sejarah Melayu* was the “oldest” written version of the work.⁶ He even claimed that the manuscript discovered by Blagden was in fact part of the long version of the Raffles 18. Both claims of his are recognised by most Malay scholars today and several of them have even transliterated this particular version of the *Sejarah Melayu*, based on Winstedt's model.

The Raffles 18, which is also called the 1536 version, was copied in the early nineteenth century. Its text ends with the narrative about the murder of Patih Ludang.⁷ However, this narrative and several others (beginning with the twenty-fourth and ending with the thirty-first narrative) are transplants taken from the Blagden manuscript by Winstedt. They continue the story beyond the killing of Tun Ali Hati in the standard version of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*. This part of the Raffles 18 shares similarities with the manuscript owned by Sultan Abdul Rahman Syah of Lingga.⁸

Based on my own comparative study of the content structure of several manuscripts of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, I have come to the conclusion that with the exception of the extended (or long) version of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, most of the varied copies of the manuscript hew towards a standard version. Unknown by many scholars, the Krusenstern MS mentioned earlier is a prototype of the standard version.

Because of their many similarities, I consider that both the Krusenstern MS and the Raffles 18 were copied from two different texts, but have a common master text.⁹ As to when the master text of the “genealogy of Sultans” was written, no one can authenticate the exact date, even though Winstedt suggested that the original copy was likely to have been written by a polyglot who had witnessed for himself the events leading to the conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese.¹⁰

In his study of traditional Malay literature and culture, Winstedt had time and again over-emphasised the role of Indian cultural and literary factors in influencing Malay art forms, cultural values and traditional literature. His statement that “[a]nyone who surveys the field of Malay literature will be struck by the amazing abundance of the foreign flora and the rarity of indigenous work” has irked many a Malay scholar who views such a sweeping statement as irrational for a scholar of his stature. In his mind, Winstedt viewed the Malays as passing through three distinct historical phases, namely; the primitive stage symbolised by the Shaman; the Hinduistic stage symbolised by Saiva; and the Islamic stage symbolised by the Sufi. While part of the statement regarding the borrowing and adaptation of foreign influences is probably true, Winstedt’s rigid compartmentalisation nevertheless appeared to have ignored the obvious creative ingenuity of the Malay people (Ismail Hussein 1966: 78). Not surprisingly, Malays of the younger generation have not held back from describing him as an Orientalist of the highest order.

Nonetheless, as pointed out by the late Professor Ismail Hussein, it cannot be denied that Winstedt’s work, which became the basis and the starting point for the study of Malay literature, has a special place in the history of Orientalism and the study of traditional Malay literature. In a period where no native scholars of equal repute existed, where no one possessed similar levels of extensiveness and depth in terms of understanding Malay culture and literature, it must be admitted that the Orientalist stand taken by scholars like Winstedt was unavoidable. As a matter of fact, even today one can still find Malay scholars echoing his and other European Orientalists’ opinions in evaluating works such as the *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Raja Pasai*. Winstedt’s claim that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* was recopied in 1230 AH or 1814 CE has been repeated by most people, including Malays, even though the date is wrong.¹¹ Winstedt, however, was quite correct when he said that the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* had served as a model for the author of the *Sejarah Melayu*, who had paraphrased and quoted its contents. To Winstedt, the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* once again demonstrated the Indian influence found in traditional Malay literature (Winstedt 1938: 26).

Before the Second World War, Malay writers would turn to Winstedt for references to traditional Malay literature. Therefore, not many realised the significance of Kawi in the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* since Orientalists like Winstedt did not pay attention. Even regarding recent discussions of the Jawi script found on the Terengganu Inscription of 1308 CE, both Orientalists and Malay scholars failed to notice the presence of several Old Javanese words inscribed on the stone (Ahmat Adam 2017: 44-50). For example, based on my study of the Krusenstern MS, I am quite convinced that the senior prince in Narrative 2 of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, who landed with his brothers on Bukit Siguntang, is not called Sang Sapurba, Si Parba or Saparba, but Sang Supraba (a Kawi word adapted from Sanskrit which means “very bright or splendid”, “glorious”, or “having a good appearance”. “Supraba” is also another name for the Buddha,¹² and he is said to be the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. Also known as Bichitram (from the Sanskrit “Vicitra”) his emergence at Bukit Siguntang is accompanied by two other princes, all of them claiming descent from Raja Iskandar (Alexander the Great), king of the world.¹³ These divine personalities were identified as merely individuals and not by religion, clearly showing that the unknown author of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* had no intention of projecting the prior establishment of Buddhism or any of the Vishnavite systems of belief in a Malay region. In the same line of thinking, the said author renamed Parameswara, the first ruler of Melaka, as Iskandar Syah, or Alexander the Great.

Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn and Sang Supraba in the *Sejarah Melayu*

On several occasions I have mentioned that the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* is a work of myth, fiction and at most only part history of the genealogy of the Malay Rajas, which starts by introducing the character of Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn, who appears in the Holy Qur'an and the *Hikayat Iskandar Dhu'l-Qarnayn* as ruler of the East and West – who became the alter ego of Sang Supraba, Seri Tri Buana, Nila Pahlawan, Bichitram Syah and Sang Nila Utama. All these characters were said to be founders of the Malay kingdoms of Minangkabu, Tanjung Pura, Bentan, Tumasik or Singapura and Melaka, and their genealogy was uninterrupted even after the Portuguese invasion, when the royals established themselves in Johor. It was during the reign of Sultan 'Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Syah in Johor Lama when a request was made to rewrite the copy of the *Sejarah Melayu*.

By renaming the first ruler of Melaka after the legendary Dhu'l Qarnayn, the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* implied that Parameswara did convert to Islam¹⁴ just before his death in 1413 or 1414. For the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* the name Iskandar was symbolic of a perfect Muslim. Most commentators of the Qur'an consider Dhu'l-Qarnayn to be a righteous king who was granted miraculous means for conquering the world, and was spoken to directly by God (verse 86 of Surah *al-Kahf*).¹⁵ In the author's imagination, he made Dhu'l-Qarnayn the great ancestor of the Malay kings.

The subtitle of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*

As was mentioned earlier, the *Sejarah Melayu*'s original title is *Sulalat u's-Salatin yakni Pituturan Segala Raja-Raja*. While most scholars who have worked on the *Sejarah Melayu* are quite familiar with its title in Arabic, few could really transliterate the Kawi word “*pituturan*” in Jawi [*ڤتوتورن*] correctly, which is key to understanding the text. Thus for over two centuries people have misread the sentence in the opening chapter of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* as quoted by Winstedt, “*Bahawa hamba minta diperbuatkan hikayat pada Bendahara, peraturan* (with the original words in Jawi placed in brackets: [*ڤد هاري ڤرتتورن*]) *segala raja-raja Melayu dengan istiadatnya ...*”

Indeed, the original words used were actually “*pada hari pituturan segala raja-raja Melayu*”. The Kawi phrase “*pada hari*” had been misread by many transliterators as “*pada Bendahari*”, who assumed that this was a misspelling. As stated earlier, the sentence should really have been translated as “I request that a chronicle be composed to address the younger brothers and distant relatives of various stations and ranks with soothing words for all Malay Rajas and their ceremonials for remembrance so that our descendants will hear them and memorialise every word of it.”¹⁶ The mistake in the reading and hence the transliteration of this Javanese sentence in the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* seems to have continued for over a long period of time. Even local Malay scholars have never bothered to question the accuracy of the transliteration of the Old Javanese words by the Orientalists. Due to the unquestioning acceptance of the Orientalists' writings by Malay scholars, the latter have failed to rectify the mistakes made by the former in their reading and interpretation of traditional Malay literature.

Traditional Malay literature in the context of Nusantara culture

That the study of traditional Malay literature cannot be isolated from Javanese influence had already been pointed out by the late Professor Ismail Hussein in his landmark lecture to members of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1966. Ismail mentioned that when discussing traditional Malay literature, it must be placed within the context of a wider Nusantara culture. Winstedt's attempt to avoid the Nusantara-centric treatment of Malay works such as the Malay *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which were produced when Java had a role in the propagation of Hindu culture, will bring no benefit to the study of traditional Malay classics. Logically, this should also apply to works such as the *Sejarah Melayu*. One should not forget that there were a large number of Javanese who were ever present in the Malay courts along the Straits of Melaka. By classifying Malay literature as having a “Javanese element”, and by

claiming that the *Hikayat Hang Tuha* “was an inspired piece modelled upon the *Panji Tales* and supplemented by Indian elements”, Winstedt is actually denying the local genius factor in producing such works (Ismail Hussein 1966: 79). This writer agrees with Ismail’s proposition that a philological approach should be adopted to study traditional Malay literature, namely textual reconstruction, interpretation and analysis (ibid.). But because the Jawi script used in the Malay texts does not have the proper vowel system, scholars will need to read several different versions of such works. It is only by making a comparison of the various texts that one realises, for example, that the word “*pecah*” (to break) found in the sentence “... *sekaliannya dipecahkannya sarongnya [sic]*”¹⁷ (Winstedt 1938: 105) has been wrongly read by most transliterators, including C.C. Brown, who claimed that this meant the “creeses” (keris) were broken. In fact, the word is actually “*pecat*”, which in Kawi means “to unsheathe”.

Another misreading by the copyists is the word “*pergonjaklah*” which in Kawi means “to jest”, “tease” or “to make jokes”. All the transcribers and copyists have misread it as “*perkejanglah*” (Ibrahim Kandu 1812: 3), “*perkunjalah*” (Muhammad Tajuddin Tamby Hitam (Or. 14734, 1873: 3), “*berguncanglah*” (Winstedt 1938: 42) and “*pergoncanglah*” or “*perkejutlah*” (Abdullah Munsyi 1841: 5; Situmorang and Teeuw 1952: 2) and Shellabear (1957: 3). As a result, Malay transliterators variously read the word as “*perkejutlah*” (A. Samad Ahmad 1986: 3), “*kencanglah*” (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1997: 4), and “*goncanglah*” (Abdul Rahman Ismail 2009: 66). Another common Kawi word found in the *Sejarah Melayu* is the word “*Agra*” (from Sanskrit, meaning “best”, “first”, “chief”, “foremost” or “prominent”) which has been transcribed by almost all transcribers from Jawi to Rumi as “*Akar*”, as in the name “Sri Akar Raja” which should rightly be pronounced as “Sri Agra Raja”. There are in fact numerous other Kawi words, such *prastawa*, *karunia*, *Malini*, *Empu* (which is written as “*Empuk*” in the *Sejarah Melayu*), *Sundari*, *Megat*, and *hwan* (read as “*Wan*”) which are either borrowed from Sanskrit or are of Javanese origins. The inability of many transliterators in reading the Old Jawi script, because of its inconsistency in terms of the vowelling system, was a problem for most readers and transcribers. Hence there was a tendency for copyists to either change the words or interpolate them whenever it suited them.

Having carefully studied the contents, language and structure of the Krusenstern MS, I personally think that it is the second oldest copy of the text in existence after the Raffles 18, but the oldest to be copied for a European. Copied in 1798 by three Melaka copyists, it shares similarities with the one introduced by Abdullah Munsyi, published by a mission press in Singapore around 1841/42. It may also have been the text (or a similar one) copied by Raffles’s clerk, Ibrahim Kandu, which was then translated by John Leyden. It is for this reason that this writer thinks that to do justice to the discussion on the origins and authorship of the *Malay Annals*, several variants of the text would need to be studied. While the Shellabear redaction (1896) has been the most widely read text, it is merely a hybrid, for the “reviser” had indeed relied on several sources for his recension (Linehan, 1947: 105).

The late Professor Roolvink has categorised the texts of the *Malay Annals* into two prototypes: the short (standard) and long versions, which this writer explained earlier. Several versions end with the narrative about the killing of Tun Ali Hati and the Portuguese invasion, including the Krusenstern MS, texts which relied on the Abdullah redaction, Raffles 76, Raffles 80, Farquhar 5 and the manuscript from Palembang (Reinhold Rost, 1887: 17; Roolvink, 1967: 308–309). The said chapter is also found in both the Raffles 18 and the Shellabear text. In the Shellabear redaction, however, like the Leiden Cod. Or. 12026 and other copies of its kind (the extended version), further episodes have been included and the text ends with a narrative on the ascension of Raja Ali to the throne of Johor and the attack on Johor by Jambi, which occurred in 1673 [1083 AH] (Ismail Hussein, 1979: 191).

The question that Roolvink raised *viz.* whether the short version had formed the basis of the Raffles 18 is an interesting one. I think that its copyist, had in 1612 incorporated the Blagden manuscript (that is, the eight stories which formed the last eight narratives of the Raffles 18) with the original standard version. These last chapters enlarged the original version to cover events that took place prior to 1535/36. As stated earlier, this writer suspects that the Krusenstern MS and the Raffles 18 share the same master text. This writer thinks that the narratives in the Krusenstern MS were later endorsed by later redactors or

copyists of the *Malay Annals* to be used as a basis for their texts, and then interpolated them with other episodes.¹⁸

The essence of Orientalism

It was due to the problem of reading Old Jawi that many Orientalists have, until today, failed to transliterate the the *Sejarah Melayu* correctly. But being Orientalists who, as described by Edward Said, are Europeans using the “academic” label, “usually see, imagine, emphasize, exaggerate and distort differences between the Arab (read Asian) people and cultures as compared to Europeans and Americans.” With regard to the study of traditional Malay literature: in the nineteenth century, when British colonialism was at its peak, the colonial officers (who became scholars of Malay “studies”) looked upon the Malays and the Malay region as different and inferior, and therefore needed Western intervention or “rescue”. This hegemonic attitude appears to demonstrate “the essence of ‘Orientalism’”, which is “the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority” (Said 1978: 42). Thus it is difficult to deny the fact that Orientalism and post-colonialism in general still, in some ways, continue to encourage Eurocentrism. Non-Western problems are structured within a Western framework and do not actually draw attention to the issue at hand. “Orientalism” can also refer to a general patronising Western attitude even if that attitude emanates from a deep ignorance of the basic traits of “traditional Malay literature”. This patronising attitude can still be seen today, as demonstrated by a French academician by the name of Henri Chambert-Loir; who pretends to be an expert “scholar” of the Malay language, culture and literature. Chambert-Loir certainly fits into Said’s definition of “the Orientalist” viz. anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient in terms of its specific or general aspects – regardless of their own professional discipline (Edward Said 1978: 2).

Chambert-Loir and contemporary Orientalism

In a disparaging review¹⁹ of this writer’s book, *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*, which is based on a critical study of the Krusenstern MS, Chambert-Loir assumes that the recension that this writer edited was merely a transcription of a manuscript corrected by me – “according to [my] taste, [my] knowledge and [my] hypotheses, most often without any consideration for the readings of other editions, other than to declare them faulty” (see p. 216 of his review). Chambert-Loir is troubled by my criticisms of Western editors of the *Sejarah Melayu*, especially my new interpretative reading of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* which is admittedly quite different from the usual and conventional reading by the European Orientalists. He pays close attention to my criticism of Revunenкова’s Russian edition of the *Sejarah Melayu*, even though the contents had been spelt out to me by Dr Victor Pogadaev, an associate professor of the Russian language who was then teaching Russian at the University of Malaya. Chambert-Loir was critical of my description of the Russian author’s knowledge of Jawi as “deficient” even though she has wrongly transliterated the name of the Majapahit princess “Purna Lango” as “Kirana Langu”. Dr Revunenкова has also stated that there are thirty-four narratives (instead of the correct thirty, which symbolises the thirty chapters of the Qur’an). The structure of the chapters in her work followed the order set by Shellabear. For example, even the story about the duel between Hang Tuha and Hang Kesturi is placed in Narrative 16, even though the episode should rightly be incorporated into Narrative 12, which depicts the visit of Sultan Mansur Syah to Majapahit (See *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* 2016: xc–xci). On p. 212 of his review, Chambert-Loir takes issue over my not commenting on Dr Revunenкова’s essay which she published in the *Manuscripta Orientalia* vol. 12: 2 (2006). He has no reason to do so actually, because firstly I found no new information in the said article, and secondly because Chambert-Loir has not read Dr Revunenкова’s book himself and has never made any effort to enquire about the contents of the book. Thus, he is only assuming that Dr Revunenкова has “studied the text in a careful and competent way” (see p. 312 of his review). These assumptions seem to tally with Edward Said’s labelling of European Orientalism as “consequently a racist, an imperialist and

almost totally ethnocentric” doctrine.

From his review, it is clear that Chambert-Loir does not have a strong grasp of Old Jawi. For example, he is ignorant of the way the word *Bota* or *Bhuta* (a demon) should be spelt. For over two centuries European Orientalists wrongly pronounced the word spelt in Jawi as /ba-ṭa/ [باط], as “Bat”, and Chambert-Loir strongly disagrees with my reading method of the Jawi script, which differs from most European conventions, including his. He disagrees with my assertion that the reading of the Jawi letters /ba/ṭa/ [باط] should be pronounced *Bota* because of the letter /ṭa/ with a *fathah*. “*Bota*” or “*Bhuta*” is from the Sanskrit “*bhuta*”, and it is also found in Kawi.

Chambert-Loir’s counter-argument hinged on the use of the Arabic diacritical marks *fathah* and *shaddah*, which he doesn’t seem to fully understand. *Shaddah* is a diacritic shaped like a small written /w/. It is used to indicate germination (consonant doubling or pronounced with extra length such as the doubling of [ṭ] as in the word *bhaṭṭa*). He doesn’t seem to know that in the case of [باط] in the spelling /b/ ṭ / [باط], it has a *fathah* (the small diagonal line placed above a letter). Due to this, the correct reading of the word is “*bota*” since the *fathah* on the letter [باط] represents a short /a/. Like the Old Jawi spelling for “*duli*” which is spelt /d/ḷ/ [دڤل] that is, without the vowel /u/, there is also no vowel after the consonant /ba/. Thus the spelling of /b/ṭ/ [باط] should obviously be read as /*bhuta*/ or /*bota*/. However, Chambert-Loir insists that the Jawi spelling should be read as “*Bat*”, which comes from the Sanskrit *bhatta* (p. 219) which, according to him (quoting van Ronkel), means “the erudite, the bard”. This definition was not found in any of the Sanskrit dictionaries that I use. *Has he really quoted van Ronkel correctly?* I wonder. According to the *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* by Sir William Monier-Williams (1999, first edition 1872), “*bhatta*” is a title of respect addressed to a prince, such as “My Lord”; whereas “*bhata*” means “a mercenary, hired soldier or warrior, hireling, or servant”. The word “*bhuta*” (or Malay “*bota*”) on the other hand, according to Monier-Williams, means “priest of the gods, purified divine being; good being, a created thing, a spirit (good or evil), or a great devotee or ascetic ghost, goblin or demon”. In Malay, “*bhuta*” or “*bota*” is called “*raksasa*”.

As an Orientalist, Chambert-Loir has also revealed his ignorance of the Malay language and Jawi spelling when he picks on issues of orthography (such as disputing my assertion that the copy of the Krusenstern MS is of good quality). But Chambert-Loir’s definition of a “good quality” manuscript is subjective. He thinks that as a whole the quality of the copying of the Krusenstern MS is mediocre (p. 214). I presume that he is judging it based on the handwriting of one or two of the manuscript’s scribes, which I described as “careless and negligent in certain places”. But unlike Chambert-Loir, I maintain that the copying of the Krusenstern MS is on the whole of good quality because I do not consider the preservation of the Kawi words by the scribe(s) as contributing to the manuscript’s mediocrity. On the contrary, the adroitness of the scribes of the Krusenstern MS, compared to the scribe of the Raffles 18, in copying accurately the non-Malay words (just as they did with the *Ciri*) is a big help to readers and transliterators alike. In comparison, the Raffles 18 scribe fails to read the Acehnese word “*gogalah*” correctly (from the Persian “*gogah*”), meaning “tumult”, or “din”), and this consequently led Winstedt to transcribe it as “*ngunglah*”, while Shellabear read it as “*gemparah*” and Abdul Rahman Ismail as “*ngeranglah*”. The scribe of the Raffles 18 also glaringly miscopied the Old Javanese word “*gonjaklah*” as /k/n/ḡ/ṇ/ḥ/ which prompted Winstedt to read it as “*berguncanglah*”, Shellabear as “*perkejutlah*”, and Abdul Rahman Ismail as well as Muhammad Haji Salleh as “*goncanglah*”. Meanwhile the word “*amerta*” (from Sanskrit “*amṛta*” meaning “immortal”) has also been wrongly transcribed as “*amarat*” by both Winstedt and Brown.

Since Chambert-Loir has probably not read the Jawi original of the Raffles 18 in its entirety, he is obviously not aware that many Kawi words have been misread or left out by the scribe or the editors who worked on it. From Chambert-Loir’s perusal of the Krusenstern MS, I deduce that that he has not read the facsimile when he tries to excuse himself by saying that: “I suppose nobody in the world, not even in Malaysia, will choose to read the Jawi text in its original form rather than the Latin transcription any more” (see p. 212 of his review). I think that this is the main cause of his failure to write a fair and

objective review of my edition of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*.

Furthermore, by describing portions of some pages of the Krusenstern MS as “mediocre”, he only exhibits his ignorance of Jawi and that he is unable to compare the quality of copying by the scribe of the Raffles 18 with that of the Krusenstern MS. Granted, the script on f. ii–f. ii: 2, and f. x of the latter shows that the Jawi letters are larger than the normal size; nonetheless, I still find it quite legible for reading. My comments on the irregularity of the Jawi spelling on p. xcvi are certainly apt as the Krusenstern MS was copied by three scribes and spelling errors or inconsistencies are expected; for example, one may find the word */mengadap/* being spelt differently by another scribe as */mengadab/* since his ethnic background was most probably Javanese. But one cannot conclude, as Chambert-Loir has done, that the quality of the whole manuscript is mediocre – especially by someone who does not know how to read Jawi that well and likely can’t even write Jawi. Chambert-Loir’s failure to read the Jawi script of the work properly has indeed prevented him from comprehending its full contents. He also forgets that while the Jawi script of the Raffles 18 looks neater, the manuscript’s scribe makes more spelling errors than the scribes of the Krusenstern MS, thus indicating that the former’s quality of copying the Raffles 18 is poorer when compared to the scribes of the Krusenstern MS. The problem with Chambert-Loir is that he apparently thinks that the Raffles 18 is the perfect copy of the *Malay Annals* and he expects the scribes of the Krusenstern MS to follow what has been copied by the scribe of the Raffles 18.

Without a good knowledge of Jawi he passes judgement on the quality of the scribes’ writing, which he says is mediocre, although he is not in a position to judge. He makes a daring comment that the name of Allah (which he finds occurs frequently) has been written with double */lam/* [ل] which are so small that to him they look like one */s/* and so he says the word looks more like */ash/* than */Allah/* because, according to him, “the */h/* is reduced to a miniscule slanting stroke” (p. 214). His pretension to be able to recognise good quality Jawi by trying to scrutinise the spelling of the word “Allah” does reveal his poor knowledge of the Jawi script. He does not know that there are various styles of writing the Jawi script.

Besides that, he also complains about some peculiarities of the manuscript’s orthography, such as the writing of the letter */dal/* [د], which looks like */lam/* [ل], but he never relates it to the mistake often found in the other manuscripts of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, in particular the Raffles 18, where the correct word “*adiraja*” has been replaced by “*al-diraja*” by the scribe who mistook the letter */dal/* [د] for */lam/* [ل]. As far as I know only the Shellabear and Abdullah recensions use the word “*diraja*”, which is closer to “*adiraja*”, the suffix for the name of Seri Bija Diraja. But surprisingly Chambert-Loir is silent on this. He does not recognise the accuracy of the scribes of the Krusenstern MS in copying the word “*adiraja*”. For this I maintain that overall, the Krusenstern MS is better written.

Chambert-Loir also mentions the *Ciri* but he has no comments whatsoever regarding the full text of the *Ciri* in the Krusenstern MS and he is silent about the fact that I am the only one, the first to have attempted to read and transcribe the *Ciri* in its complete form. Instead, he makes an unsubstantiated allegation that “the fascination for Old Javanese perverts a famous passage of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*, the *Ciri*.” The word “*Ciri*” in Old Javanese means “sign”, “distinctive mark”, “proof” or “evidence”, and in Malay refers to the supernatural mantra recited during the installation of a king. But instead of being unbiased, Chambert-Loir sarcastically remarks that it is “extremely surreal to try and read, and translate, a text in an unknown language by thumbing up a dictionary, even more so if the dictionary is one of Old Javanese, while the language is believed to be Sanskrit.” He cannot believe that this writer, who has studied Sanskrit during his undergraduate days, is quite capable of reading and transcribing the *Ciri* in the Rumi script. The sentiments that he has expressed only show that he has not read my book with care and diligence and has instead written his “review” with malicious prejudice and bias.

Perhaps Chambert-Loir doesn’t realise that most versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, including the Raffles 18, do not have the complete texts of the *Ciri*. While the few variant versions do contain parts of the *Ciri*, the texts are nevertheless incomplete and even the Sanskrit or Kawi words have not been correctly copied by the scribes. Due to his bias, Chambert-Loir is unable to make any fruitful comments about the “supernatural mantra”, yet blindly concludes that I have ignored or “feel entitled to ignore” the works of

past Orientalists, among others Winstedt, W. E. Maxwell, and Ph. S. van Ronkel. Chambert-Loir forgets that although I have read their work, I do not necessarily share their views. More so because the *Ciri* has either been missing or incomplete in their work. To his credit, Chambert-Loir does admit that he is “too incompetent” to discuss the transliteration and its translation.

Clearly, one reason for Chambert-Loir to make such unintelligent criticisms of my transliteration of the *Ciri* is because of his inability to read the *Ciri* in its Jawi form, which also includes Sanskrit and Kawi words. From his comments in his review of my book, I have a strong suspicion that he feels more comfortable reading past Rumi transliterations of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* and that has pretentiously implied that he has read the various texts of the *Malay Annals*, including the *Ciri*, in Jawi. Despite his weakness in this aspect, his criticism is not constructive; rather, it is rude and vulgar.

To add insult to injury, Chambert-Loir also demonstrates his callowness in his usage of the expression “*Wa'llahu a'lam bissawab*” and the more elaborate “*Wa'llahu a'lam bissawab wa ilaihi 'l marji'u wal ma'ab*”. He has even absurdly counted the number of times this concluding expression is found in the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*. For example, he says that the expression “*Wa'llahu a'lam bissawab*” is repeated seventeen times and its shorter form, “*Wa'llahu a'lam*” is only written once. Based on his counting of the long and short closing formulae he then determines the number of narratives in the text of the *Sejarah Melayu*. Indeed, this is a latter-day example of what Edward Said meant when he discussed the “distortion and inaccuracy by the Orientalist” (Said 1978: 8). Chambert-Loir's ignorance of the meanings of the Arabic expressions is also complemented by his inability to distinguish the rich presence of Old Javanese words in the *Sejarah Melayu*. As a result, he does not understand why the copyists of the Krusenstern MS used the phoneme /s/ for words like /syah/, and /S[y]ahru'l-nuwi, and why /syahid/ is spelt /sahid/ which necessitates an expert to indicate what the correct pronunciation of the word should be like. Neither does he understand why the Javanese word for “occasion” should be translated as “*prastwa*” and spelt /p/r/s/t/a/w/a/ in Jawi [فرستوا] (See Krusenstern MS 1798: f. cxlii); at other times the word may also be spelt /p/r/s/t/a/w/ [فرستو], or just /p/r/s/t/w/ [فرستو] (which is Kawi in origin) and should be pronounced “*prastawa*” even though the modern Malay pronunciation is “*peristiwa*”.

Chambert-Loir's exasperation with this writer's findings that Javanese words are found aplenty in the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* could perhaps be traced back to the day when my book *Sulalat u's-Salatin* was launched in late 2016. In my speech, I had openly criticised him for failing to recognise and understand the significance of the word “*pituturan*” which forms the subtitle of all versions of the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*.²⁰ I had told him that his commentary on the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* and the title of his article “The *Sulalat al-Salatin* [sic] as a Political Myth” fail to take into account the meaning that the word “*pituturan*” carries. It was not the intention of the author to create “political myth”, as suggested by Chambert-Loir. Furthermore, Chambert-Loir thinks that the correct title should be *Sulalat al-Salatin* and not *Sulalat u's-Salatin*, which does show that he does not know Arabic pronunciation.

His simplistic dismissal of the presence of Kawi words in the *Sejarah Melayu* reflects badly on his ignorance of such topics as Malay philology in the Nusantara linguistic context, which the late Professor Ismail Hussein mentioned in his MBRAS lecture in 1966. Chambert-Loir's criticism comes across as patronising, especially when he labels my argument in defence of the presence of innumerable words of Kawi origin as an act of “Javanese frenzy” (see p. 218 of his review). Chambert-Loir even described it as “barbaric” when I pointed out that the expression “*sekali prastawa*” was used by one of the Javanese copyists of the Krusenstern MS. He goes as far as to claim that it “does not mark any progress in philology” and even “sounds like a joke” (ibid.). Besides highlighting his ignorance of Malay philology, which he shows through his blind rejection of my usage of “[sic]” to indicate the archaic forms of words such as “*menengar*” (for “*mendengar*”), “*tuha*” (for “*tua*”), “*ra'na*” (for “*ratna*”), “*karuniya*” (for “*kurnia*”), “*nityasa*” (for “*senantiasa*”); and he even counted the number of footnotes I used in the book – which according to him totalled 1,579! Perhaps Chambert-Loir is uneasy that someone from the “Orient” is teaching him what he does not know. His obtuseness with regard to Malay philology is also shown by his criticism of this writer's transliteration of the words “*keinderaan*” and “*kembalilah*” (see p. 33 of my

book). He says they should instead be read as “*kendaraan*” [sic] and “*kayalah*” because, he says, this is the reading in all other published versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*! How could a so-called expert in Malay traditional literature not understand the difference between the archaic word “*keinderaan*” and the modern Malay word “*kendaraan*” [sic, *kenderaan*]? Or the difference in meaning between the word “*kembalilah*” and “*kayalah*” in the sentence, “*Maka Wan Empuk dan Wan Malini pun kembalilah [كماليله] sebab mendapat anak raja itu*”? He also criticised this writer’s transliteration of the phrase, “*dan segala ulama dan hukama meayarkan [emphasis added] emas dan perak*” (p. 218), claiming that that the word “*meayarkan*” “is an incongruous creation on an Old Javanese base”; but in reality, he does not know that the Kawi word means “to unfold” or “spread out” and it accurately translates the action of the king, nobles, warrior, scholars, and ulama and judges to spread out their gold, silver and and jewels of all sorts.

Chambert-Loir also accuses me of having changed the title “*Hikayat Hamzah*” to “*Hikayat Hamurabi*” on p. 26 of my book (see his review on p. 217). If anybody were to read the narrative about Raja Suran in the first chapter of my book (p. 26), it is clear that the copyist of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin* has written: “*Adapun fasal Raja Suran jikalau dihiyatkannya seperti “Hikayat Hammurabih” [sic] tebalnya hikayat*” (in English the sentence would be: “Regarding the story of Raja Suran, if all of it were to be narrated like the *Hikayat Hammurabih* [sic] it will be a thick *hikayat*”). In order to explain it further, I have also added a footnote (no. 92) to the word “Hammurabih” which reads: “In the Abdullah’s published version [Situmorang and Teeuw, 1952: 20] and Shellabear’s text (1896: 25) the name Hammurabi is not used, but instead the name of Sayidina Hamzah is mentioned.” I have changed nothing, and only transliterated what was written in the Krusenstern MS, which mentions the name “Hammurabih”. As a transliterator I can’t change what is written in the original Jawi. On the other hand, the *Hikayat Hamzah* is mentioned on p. 351 of my book (in the thirtieth narrative) which relates the story of Afonso Dalboquerque’s conquest of Melaka. The said sentence reads: “*Maka oleh Sultan Ahmad dinugerai [sic] baginda Hikayat Hamzah [sic, Hikayat Amir Hamzah]*” (in English: “And so Sultan Ahmad presents the *Hikayat Hamzah*”). Judging from the two different stories and contexts of situation that I have tried to show, it is clear that Chambert-Loir is not telling the truth here. For someone who is quite incapable of checking the Jawi text of the Krusenstern MS himself, he just assumes that the name should be “*Hikayat Hamzah*” instead of “*Hikayat Hamurabi*” as written by the scribe. He even ludicrously dismisses the correct usage of the phrase “*raja masyrik-maghrib*” (king of the East and the West), and instead proposes “*raja syarif-maghrib*” (king of the Syarif of the West) on the ground that “*syarif*” refers to a descendant of the Prophet.

His criticisms even extend to my way of punctuating certain sentences. He gives for example the sentence in f. iv: “*Kata yang empunya ceritera pada suatu masa, bahawa Raja Iskandar anak Raja Darab Rum, bangsa Makaduniah nama negerinya Zulkarnain geranya, sekali baginda berjalan hendak melihat matari [sic, matahari] terbit, maka baginda sampai pada sar[had] dekat negeri Hindia*”. Chambert-Loir adds /*nya*/ (which is not in the text) to the word “*bangsa*” and by so doing he assumes that my punctuation is wrong. Here again he shows his ignorance in terms of reading an archaic Malay sentence. In reality, the phrase “*bangsa Makaduniah nama negerinya*” is perfectly right. The word “*bangsa*” here denotes “descent” or “nation”. Thus Raja Iskandar, according to the sentence is the son of Raja Darab of Rome, of the Macedonian nation, being his country...” Chambert-Loir’s concoction of the sentence will of course result in a change in meaning because “*nya*” is added to “*bangsa*”, which can be translated as “his race”.

Another sentence punctuation (f. clxxi) which he claims to be wrong is: “*Maka kata orang Melaka, ‘Ini Benggali putih’ pada seorang Feringgi itu. Berpuluh-puluh orang Melaka meng[h]aru dia; ada yang mengurut misai, ada yang memutar janggut...*” (And so the Melaka men said to one of the Franks, “This is a white Bengali.’ Scores of the Melaka men keep annoying him; some are stroking his moustache while others twisting his beard ...). To Malay readers this is certainly a valid punctuation because the sentence “This is a white Bengali” is addressed to, or is referring to, one of the Portuguese. What really makes the sentence in the Krusenstern MS different is that after the expression “*Ini Benggali putih*”, it is not followed

by the punctuation word “Maka” as found in some other versions, which would indicate that there is a new sentence. But Chambert-Loir thinks otherwise. He thinks the sentence should be: “Maka kata orang Melaka, ‘Ini Benggali putih’. Pada seorang Feringgi itu berpuluh-puluh orang Melaka mengharu dia” (see p. 216 of his review). One may ask why Chambert-Loir insists that his punctuation is the correct one because “it is found in all other editions.” Is this really true scholarship? Or must the copyists of the Krusenstern MS be faulted for not following other copyists of the *Malay Annals*?

His preposterous claim shows that he doesn’t understand or simply ignores the fact that the equivalent sentence found in the Krusenstern MS is different. Presumably he has not read the Raffles 18 version edited by Abdul Rahman Ismail (2009: 254) which has the sentence: “Ia ini Benggali putih” (He is a white Bengali). This is followed by “Maka seorang-seorang Feringgi itu berpuluh-puluh orang laki-laki mengerumuni dia” (Hence one after another of the Franks are surrounded by scores of men). Likewise, in Abdullah Munshi’s text (Stumorang and Teeuw 1952: 270), the same sentence appears as: “Maka kata orang Melaka, ‘Ia ini Benggali putih. Maka pada seorang-seorang Feringgi itu (meaning “Hence to every Frank”) berpuluh-puluh orang Melaka mengerumuni dia.” It doesn’t in any way indicate that “seorang-seorang” refers to one lone Frank; rather it means one person after another. Only in the version edited by A. Samad Ahmad (1979: 244) does the sentence appear to refer to one Frank being surrounded by many Malays, which is similar to the Krusenstern MS whereby the words “Ini Benggali putih” refer to a single Frank. The sentence in A. Samad Ahmad’s edition reads: “Maka kata orang Melaka, ‘Ia ini Benggali putih’. Maka pada seorang orang Feringgi itu berpuluh-puluh orang Melaka mengerumuni dia, ada yang memutar janggutnya....” (Then said the Melaka men, “He is a white Bengali”. And at one of the Franks scores of the Melaka men surround him...). In the Shellabear edition (1977: 183), the sentence goes like this: “Maka kata orang Melaka, ‘Ia ini Benggali putih’. Maka pada seorang orang Feringgi itu berpuluh-puluh orang Melaka mengerumuni dia.” Thus based on the Malay syntax, the sentence that I punctuated is perfectly correct, which Chambert-Loir does not understand.

Like in many other instances of his reading of the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*, Chambert-Loir has obviously shown that he has not fully understood the language style of the Malays. This reminds me of the day that I criticised him for his misreading of the Kawi word “*pituturan*” (“*petuturan*”) in the *Malay Annals* in his 2005 article. Thus, in his review of my book, he simply says that my edits do not make the book easy to read. Perhaps this could be due to his rejection of the influence of Old Javanese on the *Sulalat u’s-Salatin*. His shortcomings can also be seen from his obsession with the Raffles 18, which does not really reflect his ability in terms of reading Malay manuscripts.

He also alleges that my transliteration of “*jadi Islam di dalam ukum [hukum] Nabi Ibrahim*” is a mere blunder (p. 216 of his review). He thinks the Jawi letters /*alif/kaaf/mim*/ [ڤڤڤ] should not be transcribed as /u/k/um/ but should instead be read as /agama/. In this writer’s explanation in the book, I have stated that “*ukum*” is a variant of the word “*hukum*” in Jawi. Those who are familiar with Old Jawi know that in Malay manuscripts, the consonant /h/ could be either omitted from or added to a word. There are many examples of variant forms, such as “*harta*” (may be spelt as /arta/), “*hulun*” (also spelt /ulun/ and “*hawar*” (sometimes spelt /awar/), “*alas*” (may be spelt /halas/, “*arit*”: (may be spelt /harit/) and the name “Tun Aria” (may be spelt as /Tun Haria/). Thus “*ukum*” could also be the reading for “*hukum*”.

Chambert-Loir does not know that the word “*hukum*” is the Malay translation for the Arabic “*sharia*” (or “*shariat*”), a word that is also transcribed by the scribe of Krusenstern MS as “*saringat*” (to show the Javanese accent). The reason why this writer reads it as “[h]*ukum*” is because Muslims believe that Abraham is one of the six Prophets upon whom have been conferred the *shariat*, known in English as Islamic canonical law. The same reading is found in the English translation of the *Malay Annals* by C. C. Brown (1952: 14). He translates “*shariat*” as the ordinance of the Prophet Abraham (the Chosen Friend of God).

It becomes clear that Chambert-Loir does not know Arabic. Neither has he ever read the Qur’an. The word “*sharia*” in the Arabic language can also be translated as “ritual”, “liturgy” or “ordinance of God”. In the Holy Qur’an the Abrahamic code is known as Abraham’s *sharia* or the code of Abraham, or

Abraham's command (Qur'an 2: 124). "Command" refers to "Allah's Will", "Decree" or "Purpose". It was Abraham's *sharia* which laid the foundation of the *sharia*, or (*h*)*ukum*, of the teachings of all the Prophets, including Muhammad. The Qur'an contains a number of verses which include the command for believers to follow the *sharia* or *millat* of Abraham.²¹

Here, I have responded to each of the points that he has disputed. Every aspect of the criticisms, namely those pertaining to "classical" Malay language and grammar, the Old Jawi script of the pre-nineteenth century Malay language, Islamic Sufism, the Abrahamic code of laws and even his misconception that the word "*al-Jawi*" in the Krusenstern MS refers to a non-Javanese, only accentuates his ignorance of the study of Malay manuscripts, particularly the *Sulalat u's-Salatin*. He is very much confused when he says that the word "*al-Jawi*", that is spelt /*alif/lam/jim/alif/waw/ya*/ [الجاوي], indicates that the person bearing this appellation is from Sumatra. Perhaps due to his weak command of the Malay language and ignorance of basic Arabic, he does not know that the Arabic word "*al-Jawi*", when attached to the name of a person, does indeed refer to a Javanese (see Soetan Muhammad Zain 1954: 205).

Conclusion

As stated by Edward Said, European Orientalism, be it German, British or French, has become a kind of intellectual authority over the Orient within Western culture since the nineteenth century. The major fault of Chambert-Loir is that he perpetuates this reading with his criticism of my work on the Krusenstern MS. However, he falls short of the academic standards of Winstedt or Blagden from the colonial period, demonstrating his biases when reviewing "the new version of the *Sejarah Melayu*", which I have disproved here. His inclination to be prejudiced against my work is probably personal (perhaps racist) but it could also be due to his poor command of not just "classical" Malay, but more importantly Old Jawi. I suspect that this bias has led him to put forward criticisms purely based on false assumptions and pure ignorance of the Malay language, the Jawi script and the Islamic belief – but above all, his refusal to accept the Kawi influence found in the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* – which reminds me of the wisdom of the Malay proverb, "*Kalau tali kail panjang sejengkal laut dalam jangan diduga*", which in English is: "If [your] fishing line is only a span long, don't try to fathom how deep the sea is."

¹ In another manuscript of the *Malay Annals*, the copyist claimed that it was written on 12 *Rabi'ul-awal* 1023 H (22 April 1614 CE) which happened to be a Tuesday. See E.U.L. MSS. Or. 458 New College 132. Mkm 644 Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia. Further details on this discussion can be found in Chapter 1.

² An Orientalist is someone from the West who studies the language, culture, history or customs in countries of Eastern Asia.

³ Ahmat Adam, *Hikayat Hang Tuha (or Hang Tua)*, Petaling Jaya: SIRD (2018: 24).

⁴ See his classic work, *Orientalism*, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

⁵ One example of this authoritative statement is the way C. O. Blagden had to some extent convinced many Orientalists, and some Malays, that the word that is spelt /*k/t/a/h*/ [كتاه]

in Jawi which is found in the *Sulalat u's-Salatin* should be pronounced /*ku/ta/ha/* (Blagden (*JMBRAS*: 3 (1) 1925: 33). My research on the language used in the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, however, has shown that it should instead be pronounced /*ke/tah/* or /*ka/tah/*. The *Pasai* word, which is presently Acehnese, is an interrogative word for a question. In the Acehnese language, /*ke/* is pronounced /*keu/* (or /*keuh/*) (Aboe Bakar *et al.* 2001: 917); /*tah/* or /*tahe/* in Acehnese and gives an element of surprise (*ibid.*: 917). In Malay the word gives the synonym for "*gerangan*". The fault of the European Orientalists is that they tried to equate /*kutaha/* with the Sundanese word /*kumaha/* which means "how?", "what kind?" or "why?" (Hardjadibrata 2003: 454). Thus, as shown by Teuku Iskandar, the editor of the *Hikayat Aceh*, /*k/t/a/h*/ should correctly be pronounced /*ke-tah/* or /*keu-tah/* or perhaps /*keutahe/* but not /*kutaha/*. Unfortunately, the editorial committee of the *Kamus Dewan* prefers to follow the Orientalists' pronunciation of the word as /*kutaha/*.

⁶ The Raffles 18 was also translated into English and edited by C.C. Brown; later the manuscript was edited and given a Rumi transliteration by Abdul Rahman Ismail, who had it published in 1995; two years after that the Raffles 18 was edited by Muhammad Haji Salleh.

⁷ "*Ludang*" is a Kawi word meaning "to finish", "complete" or "to put an end to" (Zoetmulder 2000 [1]: 610).

⁸ Further details on last eight narratives of the Raffles 18 can be found in Chapter 2.

⁹ See Chapter 2 for a more complete discussion on the similarities between both versions.

¹⁰ See R. O. Winstedt, "The Date, Author and Identity of the Original Draft of the Malay Annals" in *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1938 [16], 3: 27).

¹¹ See this writer's recent work, *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (SIRD, 2019: xx–xxi).

¹² Incidentally, a Buddha statue was found in Bukit Siguntang and in the opinion of F. M. Schnitger it was probably dated in the

sixth century CE. Nik Hassan, a Malaysian archaeologist, however, estimates that the Bukit Siguntang image of the Buddha might have been sculpted between the late seventh century and early eighth century. See Nik Hassan Shuhaimi, “The Bukit Seguntang Buddha: A Reconsideration of Its Date”, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1979 (52) 2: 38–39).

- ¹³ For further discussions on the princes, their names and the ways in which the author discussed the Hindu-Buddhist past of the Malays, see Chapter 2.
- ¹⁴ On the conversion of Parameswara see this writer’s paper, “The Early History of Melaka According to the Text of the *Sulalat uṣ-Salatin*” read at the “Melaka In Fact” International Conference, 2–3 August 2019.
- ¹⁵ For a more complete account of the character of Dhu’l-Qarnayn in the Qur’an, see Chapter 2.
- ¹⁶ See Chapter 2 for a complete account of the misreading of the subtitle.
- ¹⁷ See Narrative 9 of the Raffles 18 regarding Sultan Mansur Syah’s visit to Majapahit.
- ¹⁸ For a full discussion of the variant texts of the *Sejarah Melayu*, please see Chapter 2. For a specific analysis of the Krusenstern MS, including information on its copyists, please see Chapter 3.
- ¹⁹ See Henri Chambert-Loir, “One More Version of the *Sejarah Melayu*”, *Archipel*, 94 (2017) Varia (Electronic version) URL: <http://archipel.revues.org/458>.
- ²⁰ See the discussion on “*pituturan*” in “Title of the Malay Annals”, in Chapter 1.
- ²¹ The phrase “*millat Ibrahim*” in the Holy Qur’an suggests the creed of Abraham instead of the religion (*deen*) of Abraham. “*Millat*” refers to “monotheism” as stated in Surah 5: 48: “For each of you, We have decreed your own law and methods. Had God willed, He would have made you one nation, but He tests you through what He has given each of you”.

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